

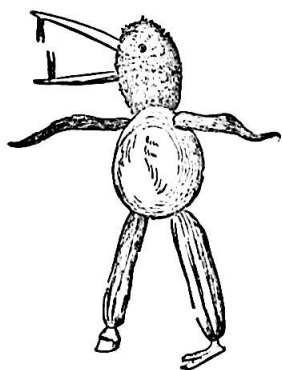
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NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

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TO THE MORNING

W. S. Merwin

Was there once a day when I knew what to ask
looking into the bright hour while it was arrayed before me
were there actual words of the only language
native to that hour and to me that rose unbidden by thought
gone at once taken by the moment as it heard them
while the shadow moved unperceived and the breath
went with its sails and the faces turned and were
there no longer though the love was still talking to them
as it is still talking to them while the rooms fade and dissolve
and the houses turn into seasons and now when so much has
vanished is it possible that in some other time
I knew how to speak of you early light
breeze in the garden toward the end of a year together
in which we wake remembering
or did you come by yourself without anyone knowing your name

HORSERADISHES

Abraham Smith

wind thin girl
sun slap hang
ham hock
sop watt
bacon as star
cat half-eye
in the catnip
the sun in the
warm neck milk
sun hawk
film on
slop bucket
grouse stiff pond
and fry food pond
and cream
cat river
woman beat shirt
on stone
lip beat out
a wild bird count
neck and ear and
throat and ear and
temple and moan
lightning stone
something
on a stick
stick or a string
hot jeans hot jeans

she sees a hawk
thinks hawk
and float
like a bag of kittens
thrown
by the bride

THE DEFINITION OF A THIEF

Sabrina Orah Mark

Walter B., as he rummaged through Beatrice's blouse pockets, asked her carefully what the word "thief" meant. He had heard this word before. Once in the great field. And once in the kitchen. It felt like a word with great distance. For years it had already seemed too late to ask. But not with Beatrice. Not now. With Beatrice he could ask anything. Gently removing his hands, as he had once removed hers, Beatrice said "it is an instance, Walter B., of carrying away something that is not yours to carry away. For example," she continued, "if I am carried away by an idea, this idea becomes for me a thief. I become nothing, in this instance, but a stolen object. I comb my hair and eat my breakfast only in the realm of this idea. To be a thief, Walter B., and this is the most important part, to be a thief means to be a person who is only able to be an existing idea if he or she carries away and then dwells in another. Do you understand?" she asked. But Walter B. had stopped listening. He was staring at Beatrice's mouth. As if he could reach inside it and pull out a long gray hair. Or an egg filled with red sugar.

THE HEALER

In the course of his human fieldwork, The Healer has worked extensively with stones, food, angels, electricity, steel, and books. The result of his work was shown last winter at The Solution Museum, to the delight of some and the silence of most. When a human disappears, The Healer calls this technique "a dip in faith." When meaning disappears, he calls this loss "a tree in a zoo." He agreed to speak to me by telephone from The City of Tomorrow.

What is the process of a human disappearing? How is it different from the way humans used to disappear?

In terms of "how do humans disappear now," typically what happens is that these humans are either killed and leave no babies or, more frequently, they build for themselves a "dwelling" behind a "barn" or a "shed." Usually there is some coercion involved, either through the soft, gentle words of a figure in uniform, or through "snacks," or through the promise of "snacks." The possibility of ever shaking these words or these "snacks" loose from the mouth becomes for the human the possibility of what I call a "nostalgic ecstasy," or "the ideal site." In terms of how this is different from "the way humans used to disappear," typically what happened then is that these humans built for themselves a "dwelling" as well, (behind a "barn" or a "shed"), but surrounded this "dwelling" with wire, hair, grass, and sometimes ducks. Also, and this happened with alarming frequency, a human would often smell his or her disappearance before he or she would see it.

In nature, a human will sometimes "crave" or "pray for" another human's disappearance. How do you explain this phenomenon?

Often this will happen when a human is arranged in such a way so that he or she appears "drunk" or "high." If this craving or prayer is written

on paper or broadcast on a radio or on a television, common words are used. Whether this craving or prayer will be discarded or carefully dried and eventually displayed in a museum or a travel station depends on number, density, and beauty. If the human quietly turns this craving or prayer inside his or her heart for one to five years, this becomes for the human a "secret dwelling." If the human turns this craving or prayer inside his or her heart for more than five years, this becomes for the human "eternal return."

So what truly disappears when a human disappears?

If a human has three names, two names will disappear. If a human has two names, frequently one name will disappear. If a human has one name, the entire name will always disappear. For example, "Beatrice."

WALTON FORD

Lauren Ireland

Where are we going next? At night zookeepers
and paper lilies line your pockets. To
paint a bird you must flatten it and its
branch and its fecundity disgusting
horse chestnuts and all. The boletes are bruised
we do not eat them. I am suspicious.
Skull on a stick. A striking necktie.
A thing on a pin.
Okapi and honeycomb for your sights.

I am going to wake up and you will
paint that. On a train. Over the long hill.

WRESTLING MOVES LIST

The Wrestling Information Archive

THESE MOVES SHOULD NEVER EVER BE ATTEMPTED
AT HOME. LET THE PROFESSIONALS DO IT.

¼ Nelson	Boston Crab
Diamond Cutter	Brain Buster
450 Splash	Bulldog (Headlock)
Airplane Spin	Bulldog, ¾ Facelock in midair
Airplane Spin Toss	(assisted)
Amityville Horror	Butt Smash, Leaping
Armbar, Crucifix (w/ Neck	Camel Clutch
Submission)	Chair Shot
Arm Breaker	Charging Headbutt
Arm Wringer	Chicken Wing
Asai Moonsault	Chinlock
Asian Spike	Chokeslam
Back Fist	Chop Block
Backward Victory Roll (Up)	Cobra Clutch
Baseball Slide	Corkscrew Elbow
Bell Clap	Corkscrew Moonsault
Belly-To-Belly Suplex	Cradle Piledriver
Big Boot	Crucifix
Big Splash	Cross-Face Chicken Wing
Bionic Elbow	Death Valley Driver
Biting	Doomsday Device
Blizzard Suplex	Double-Arm/Front DDT
Body Scissors	Double Axhandle
Boot Scrape	Double Choke

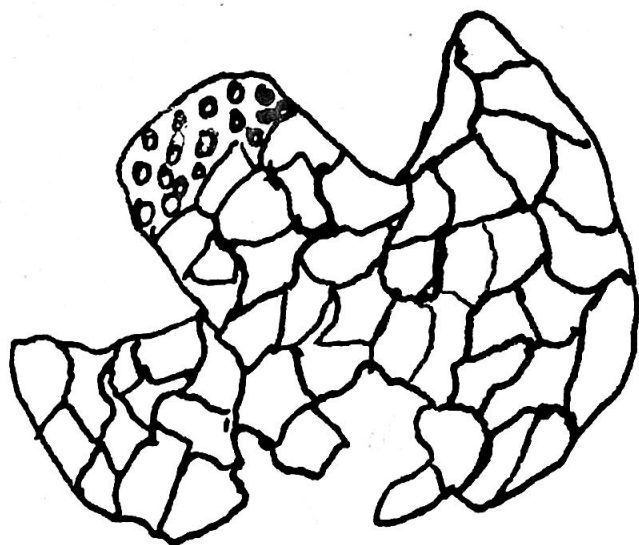
Double Gutwrench
 Double Stomp
 Double Vertical Suplex
 Dragon Sleeper
 Dragon Screw Leg Whip
 European Uppercut
 Eye Gouge
 Facebuster
 Facelock, Step-Over
 Fallaway Slam
 Firebird Splash
 Figure Four Leg Lock
 Fisherman Buster
 Fist, Leaping
 Flap Jack
 Flatliner
 Flying Clothesline
 Flying Corkscrew Clothesline
 Flying Headbutt
 Flying Lariat
 Flying Mare
 Flying Splash
 Frankensteiner
 Frog Splash
 Front Face Lock
 Full Nelson
 Gator Buster
 German Suplex
 Giant Swing
 Gorilla Press
 Gorrry Special
 Gourd Buster

Grapevine
 Gutwrench Powerbomb
 Gutwrench Superplex
 Hair Pull(ing)
 Half Crab
 Half Nelson
 Hammerbomb
 Hangman's Neck Breaker
 Headlock
 Head Vice
 Head-To-Turnbuckle
 Heart Attack
 Heart Punch
 Human Torture Rack
 Huracanrana
 Indian Death Lock
 Insiguri Kick
 Inverted DDT
 Irish Whip
 Inverted Atomic Drop
 Jackhammer
 Lateral Press
 Jawbreaker
 Japanese Arm Drag
 Kick, Mule
 Knee
 Katahajimi (Tazzmission)
 Knee to the Tailbone
 Knuckle to the Temple
 Liger Bomb
 Liontamer
 (Lou) Thesz Press

Majistral Cradle	Schoolboy
Mandible Claw	Scoop Slam
Mannequin Head, Blow To Head With	Scorpion Death Lock (Sharpshooter)
Mexican Arm Drag	Shoulder Breaker
Missile Dropkick	Sidewalk Slam
Monkey Flip	Sit-Down Powerbomb
Million Dollar Dream	Skytwister Press
Moonsault	Slap
Mosh Pit	Sleeper
Neck Breaker	Small Package
Northern Lights Powerbomb	Snapmare
Oklahoma Roll	Snow Plow
Oklahoma Slam	Spear, Gore
Oklahoma Stampede	Spinning Toe Hold
Outsider's Edge	Splash Mountain
Pancake	Star
Pedigree	Springboard Moonsault
Pole Ram	Stardust
Polish Hammer	Stomp
Pump Handle Slam	Stump Puller
Punch (fist)	Suicide Dive
Quackensmash	Suicide-Plex
Reverse Chinlock	Sunset Flip
Rings of Saturn	Super Chokeslam
Rocker Dropper	Superkick
Reverse Neck Breaker	Surfboard Chinlock
Rocket Launcher	Swan Dive
Rope Burn	Super Fisherman Buster
Russian Sickle	Swinging Neck Breaker
Samoan Drop	(Football) Tackle
Savat Kick	Taz-Plex

Texas Cloverleaf
Thumb to the Throat
Thrust Kick
Tiger Driver
Tazmission Taz-Plex
Tilt-A-Whirl Backbreaker
Toe Hold
Tornado Punch
Top-Rope Frankensteiner
Torso Flip

Torturer Crab
Tree of Woe
Tarantula
Turnbuckle Bomb
Uppercut
Vaderbomb
Tumbleweed Leg Drop
Victory Roll
Walking Crab
Whipper Snapper



CORN SMUT.

NOVEMBER

Anthony McCann

Sudden woodlands demand our attention.
Pain arrives next in a red handled thing.

And from over the hill the liquid running of drums!
As a swan parts the water and buries its fist!

This is some kind of serious facility.
The air: a bad ship: bottling gusts.

No one will call it a miracle.
No one will ever eat me again.

INTERVIEW WITH LITE BRITE NEON

Lite Brite Neon (www.litebriteneon.com) was founded in Brooklyn in 1999 when Matt Dilling set up shop to start producing custom neon lighting. Since its humble beginnings in Williamsburg, Lite Brite has helped create special lighting projects, installations, and couture displays for clients like Stella McCartney and Calvin Klein, and artists such as Keith Sonnier, Joseph Kosuth, and Julia Scher. The creations of Lite Brite have hung out at the Whitney Museum, the Dia Center for the Arts, and the Lever House. Some of the permanent work can be viewed at Rockefeller Center and the Coney Island Museum. This interview with Dilling and Lite Brite employee Cedar Mannan was conducted in March 2005 by Robert N. Casper and Leah Beeferman.

When did you start working with electricity, and with neon?

For as long as I remember, I've been fascinated with electricity—I asked for a birthday cake with a spark plug and outlet on top when I was three. In high school I got a job with an electrician who was a family friend. It was commercial work—the most interesting thing was bending conduit pipe to run wires through. At the time, my sister's art history teacher was taking a neon workshop with Craig Kraft—an artist who does a lot of body casting with neon. I thought that seemed really cool, so I took a workshop with him as well; afterwards, I worked with him and his wife at their neon shop during summers, and did a work-study program with them. I ended up going to art school and really not liking it—I spent most of my time digging through the trash at MIT.

What did you find there?

Pretty much the whole vacuum system—several vacuum pumps, variable transformers (or variacs), assorted glass manifold parts, lab glass, etc.

Lots of oscilloscopes too. As a side note, MIT used to have a mailing list called reuse@mit.edu that I was able to subscribe to by making up an MIT-like e-mail address (I think it was Mit_Spaceprogram@hotmail.com or something like that). The list was amazing, with postings like "Space rover outside of space robots program free to the first taker, building 5xablm lower level." I also took glassblowing, design, and video classes at MIT—I said I was an exchange student, and brought in bogus Xeroxes on letterhead I snagged from the trash at my school. But that's another story all together.

When you went to art school, did you think you were going to be a "traditional" artist?

No, it was always my intention to do neon. Working with neon is working with light, and I think everyone loves working with light. You're working with electricity, with fire, with hardware; you're really involved in a tactile process. I don't understand people who weld, because you have to wear all this gear. I like gear, but putting on gloves every time you make something seems like a complex process. And photography—I don't like working in the dark.

How does neon work?

We start with glass tubing from seven millimeters up to about twenty-five millimeters in size, and we heat them up with torches and bend them to whatever artwork or text we've been given. Then we seal two metal electrodes onto each end of that, with another piece of tubulation coming out to hook up and evacuate the contents of the tube. By heating up the tube with a high voltage current, we're able to excite any other particles in there and get them to release from the glass. We evacuate them with our vacuum pump, then we backfill the space with a little bit of inert gas. We heat that up and seal it off, then hook the electrodes up to a transformer, and it lights up as a tube.

The great thing about neon is it's all custom-made. Also, we have a wider variety of potential ways to use the light source, and more colors, more changes in diameter, than any other type of lighting available right now. People have their own references with neon—to architectural elements like cove lighting, or places like Times Square, or to a specific time period. When we put up the rainbow in Stella McCartney's store in the Meatpacking District, the sales person said, "You know Stella's really into this whole '80s aesthetic right now. It's pretty cool. I like the rainbow." And then we went out on the street and people were stopping and looking at the window. And they're like, "I just love how Stella's so into the '70s." Later on we talked to someone who said, "Oh, you made that giant rainbow? That's so West Village gay." And we said, "Okay—sure."

As long as it's a positive response!

Yeah, but you have to be careful in that regard, too. For instance, I won't tell clients the names for colors of neon, because people have strong responses. If you tell them the color they just picked out is lemon-yellow, they might say, "Oh no. I don't want lemon-yellow." It's the Benjamin Moore complex, where you end up asking yourself, "Do I really want my room painted charcoal or am I going to get depressed? I would much rather have it periwinkle." I think that's why people get into Pantone—you can refer to any color by a number, and it's so anonymous. And there's this whole interest in creating your own language with color and light. Apparently Calvin Klein has a Pantone chip of how much cream he wants in his coffee that he gives to people.

Speaking of color—how do you make it?

It's a combination of three things: glass color, gas color, and phosphor coating. Not all tubes use colored gas or phosphors; in fact, most red signs you see around are made of clear glass filled with neon. But, if we take a neon-filled clear tube and coat the inside of it with a phosphor that glows

blue when excited by ultraviolet light, the blue and red will mix—and the tube will glow pink. Depending on the gas we put in a tube (argon, helium, xenon, krypton, or neon) and the color of the glass (blue, red, clear, yellow, green, etc.), and the coating on a tube's interior (the main range of colors here), we can get an infinite amount of colors—or about one hundred standard shades.

One thing about color: it's a lot about demand. In the past ten years we've been blessed with a greater range of white colors thanks to the development of compact fluorescent lights and the desire for a higher-quality white. The neon industry is just too small to pull its weight without the lighting industry helping it along.

Can you talk about the way Lite Brite functions—how you work with clients, develop ideas, and so on?

We take in and distill someone's conceptual design, then figure out how it's going to be rendered and presented back to the world. A lot of that has to do with the specific application of the execution of the piece. We'll frequently make one type of snowflake that's going to be shown in a gallery in Italy and the next week make another type of snowflake that's going to hang in the window of the Gap store on Fifth Avenue. If we are creating a piece for an art gallery, longevity is important, and colors are important, and the ability for an artist to tweak their piece after it's done is also important. By contrast, if something's going in a window for one month and then coming down, whether it works as well today as it will in six years is not an issue. But cost, and whether it can fit through the little door into the window, are large issues.

Do you think neon is best used in certain applications?

I think the range of the medium is really interesting, and helps create a dynamic relationship. I don't feel it's improperly used, though I feel it's

often improperly fabricated. But contextually it's not bad that the same thing can represent the lowest end of our culture and at the same time inhabit a giant space at the Dia Center.

Are there any neon art pieces you admire?

I think Bruce Nauman's piece *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths* is profound in its simplicity: in one sentence, it sums up working with both neon and art. Light is a mystic truth—it plays such an important role in the religious and cultural history of the world. Some of Nauman's work is fascinating from a technical standpoint, too—like *One Hundred Live and Die*, in which one hundred phrases such as “eat and live—eat and die” flash on and off on a giant metal monolith. A friend of ours who does neon in Chicago is working on fabricating another copy of that right now. It's going to take him one hundred days to bend all of those, because he can only do one set a day.

How do you work with clients who are removed from the artistic process?

At one point, I felt strongly that you needed to understand a given medium in order to work well with it, while now I often feel the most interesting things are made because of people with the least knowledge of the medium. They come to it from a direction that an experienced maker doesn't view, because he's not aware or he's set in his vocabulary and focused on the technical aspects. For instance, we had a job for Burberry, and they wanted to do their plaid out of neon—including the black part. I told the visual director that black is actually the absence of light, and she just said, “I don't care. We've had our color scheme for two hundred years, and we're not going to change it because you don't think it's possible. You can do it. I don't care about the laws of physics.” So we took white neon and spray painted the front of it black—it was black, and white light glowed from around the side. Her disregard of the laws of physics was not really the

issue—the issue was she had this vision, and she wanted to make it happen. I never would have thought of doing that, because I was so hung up on the fact that you can't have light that's the absence of light.

What other technical challenges have you faced in your work?

We did a project for the Dia Center this fall that involved doing a neon grid of their space. The grid was around 80 feet by 80 feet, cut up like a giant, multi-layered game of tic-tac-toe. Instead of trying to execute it in a traditional way, we decided we'd make long—like 17-foot-neon tubes. You could pick one up at one end, and the other end would lay flat on the ground—there was that much flexibility in the glass. We ended up mounting them to two-by-fours that we stained to look like the old beams in Dia. Also, a few years back we did this installation for the artist Keith Sonnier at the Lever House. He sent us artistic renderings of the building with all this neon on it, and said, "We need to get price quotes and figure all this out—and by the way, the Lever House is a landmarked building. You can't put a single screw in anywhere." I began by trying to find existing holes in the Lever House that we could put a new screw into. And then I thought, "We need to get over this idea of attaching things and rethink how it could happen." So, we designed clamps that slid over the mullions with our hardware attached to them. They had a rubber gasket with screws that sort of compressed in, and they clamped on—we didn't have to drill any holes.

Do you think light only serves a functional role in architecture, or does it do something more?

I have all of these boring books on architectural lighting—they're all about light angles, and sunlight, and lumen outputs, very technical and very dry. And yet, the way light is incorporated into architecture isn't that technical and dry, especially now with people building in ways that

are more green. These days architects are thinking of lighting in such a dynamic way—for instance, exposing the lighting and hardware, and bringing the vernacular of the sourcing into the aesthetics of the design. There's also IKEA making interesting light fixtures, and Michael Graves designing pieces for Target—giving the masses an opportunity to buy something more than a table lamp for reading.

How big is the neon industry?

Compared to any other “industry,” it’s more of a community. In New York City there are only a handful of shops that produce their own neon tubes, and many only do work for their specific ethnic communities. The number of neon shops is decreasing, because more and more big neon signs are being replaced by LEDs. There are really only two or three other shops like ours in all of New York City, and around 250 in the country.

You’ve talked about neon as a pseudo-science—can you elaborate on that?

In the late eighteenth century, scientists like Tesla and Geisler and George Claude thought of neon as a new type of light. But as soon as Claude made neon into a commercially viable product, the focus shifted. Neon rose to an epic high—at the peak of the Depression, there were about ten times the tube benders there are now. Then it went from something everyone wanted to something no one wanted, and a lot of the science fell by the wayside. Now there’s a lot of technique—especially in North America—that’s not only unscientific, it’s flat out medieval. People talk about choking electricity using a barrel of saltwater, putting tubes in the snow or coating them with phosphor and cola to change their color, processing tubes in a microwave oven, and so on. There’s scientific reasoning behind why all of those things would affect the way gas would discharge inside a tube, but there isn’t the grounding that there is in other industries—there’s no standardized practice, and no manufacturer to say, “This will behave in this way.”

Are there any neon trade magazines?

There are, a couple. *Signs of the Times* is the gray lady of the industry. And *Sign Business*. But they're sign-based; there isn't really a neon journal. In the early 1990s, a guy in Honolulu put out a 'zine called *Neon News* that had a lot of wacky stuff. And in the mid-1990s, when the Internet was becoming what it is today, there was a neon majordomo mailing list. For a good two or three years, it was a helpful place for people to compare notes; then it turned into a giant pissing match, with comments like, "My product is better than your product" and "You don't know what you're doing."

Do you guys have any of your own trade secrets?

Oh yeah, we do.

Can you tell us about a trade secret without telling us the secret part of the secret?

Well, Cedar talks to the tubes in pig Latin occasionally.

What do you say to the tubes?

CEDAR: Ump-pay ery-vay ell-way ease-play.

That's what I say to my lights, too!

CEDAR: Tender. Talk to them. It helps, it does.

What's your favorite neon piece?

CEDAR: There's this motel in the Seattle area that's got an ancient sign—it says "Bridge Motel" in six-inch tall, basic, clear red neon. The building it's

on has started to slope and sag with time, and the neon has conformed to the slope of the building. I haven't looked at it close enough to see if the tube's been replaced, but I think there's just enough separation in the pieces that it hasn't broken.

I love the Citgo sign in Boston.

You know I got arrested for climbing that? I didn't realize they have motion detectors on it. That's the one time I've been arrested in my life.

What did you give as an excuse once the police arrived?

I said I wanted to see what the animator was—I never got to see in it, but I got to climb up close. There's this giant box with the animator in it. It's an interesting sign. I've always been fascinated by the fact that electrical components are covered—I want to open them up and find out how they work.

If you could add a new neon sign to Manhattan—money no object—what would you do?

I don't know. That's too profound. I would get stage fright, I wouldn't be able to do it . . . or, I feel it's what we already do. We get to add light in our way—maybe it's not some dramatic see-it-from-space kind of thing, but every day we get to add little bits of neon to the vernacular of the city.

TECNOLUX NEON COLORS

6500°K

Standard daylight.

BLANC JOUR

Cool daylight 7500°K.

4500°K

Standard cool white.

SPECIAL WHITE 5000°K

Cool white blend with highest color rendition values. Color Rendition Index (CRI) value of approximately 96–98.

4500°K TRIPHOSPHOR

Triphosphor cooltone, with high color rendering properties and light intensity. Color Rendition Index (CRI) value of approximately 90.

NATURAL WHITE

Special blend to beautify the appearance of red objects.

3500°K

Standard medium warm white.

2800°K

Standard warm white.

WARMTONE 2800°K

Triphosphor warmtone—resembles light emitted from incandescent lamps, with high color rendering properties and light intensity. Color Rendition Index (CRI) value of approximately 86.

3500°K TRIPHOSPHOR

Triphosphor warm white, designed to match the color and light intensity of halogen lighting. Color Rendition Index (CRI) value of approximately 86.

RUBY RED ARGON

Rich saturated red.

COBALT BLUE UNCOATED FILLED WITH NEON

Deep maroon, with a hint of blue.

PURPLE

Soft, royal purple with a velvet texture.

VIOLET

Light purple. Designed to reduce fabrication problems associated with the traditional purple.

MAGENTA

Unique and beautiful purple-red.

CITRUS ORANGE

Bright, brilliant orange.

SOFT ORANGE

Uncoated orange filled with neon gas.

4500°K

Warm orange.

UNCOATED RUBY

Soft red containing a touch of orange.

RUBY RED NEON

Rich saturated red.

GREEN

Yellow orange.

PINK

Beige fleshtone.

SALMON ROSE

Rich pink orange.

SPECIAL RED

Designed to optimize the lumen output of channel letter illuminated signs covered with red plastic.

CORAL ROSE

Extremely stable tropical color with a long-life color consistency. More stable than traditional pink achieved by blue tubing filled with neon gas.

BLUE

Hot pink.

COBALT BLUE

Fully saturated primary blue. The "ultimate" blue.

COBALT BLUE UNCOATED FILLED WITH ARGON-MERCURY

Soft midnight blue—a low light output, serene blue.

BLUE

Soft Powder Blue.

SUPER BLUE

Intense blue, with high lumen output and super rich color.

AQUAMARINE

Bright light blue with a whisper of green.

SKY BLUE

Resembles clear tropical sea color.

SUPER TURQUOISE

Unique monochrome phosphor creating a very intense rich turquoise.
High lumen output.

TRAFFIC LIGHT GREEN

Brightest green offered. Contains hint of blue. Bright and stable color consistency and long life span (lumen maintenance).

EMERALD UNCOATED

Soft teal green.

EMERALD

Bright forest green, rich and fully saturated.

GREEN

Traditional neon green.

LITE GREEN

Brilliant lime green.

LITE GREEN UNCOATED

Beautiful spring grass color.

UNCOATED GOLD

Soft electric green—a lime color.

GOLD

Warm commercial gold.

PINEAPPLE

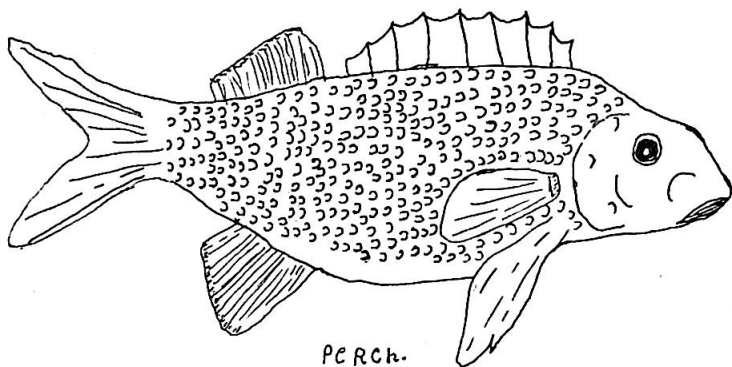
Luscious and fruity yellow which uses a single phosphor compound to reduce discoloration that may occur with traditional double coated tubing.

LEMON YELLOW

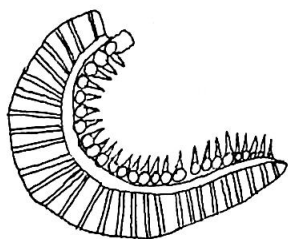
Brilliant cool yellow.

NOVIAL GOLD

Rich fully-saturated yellow-gold.



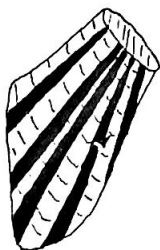
PERCH.



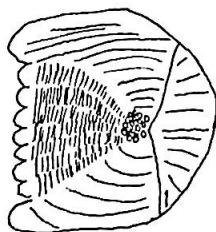
GILL.



UPPER Teeth.



FIN.



SCALE.

[OUT OF INVENTIVENESS— LOOKING]

Lisa Lubasch

out of inventiveness—looking—the clock has strayed—
abandonment—bleached as day, its underside—where the fact is
suffocated—submerged—defended from moral obligation—all
accessories fading—in rushed revisions—light is tracing—
scripting—lies are fancied—beneath awnings—and become
relentless—indefatigable chords—trimmed from mouths—or lines
of entries—the vision is fallible—tearing—is likened to idling—on
the river—over woods, abundantly—a slippery concern—is riled—to
contain abandonment—shifting—out of consonance—and anemic—
in its fathering—thrown out with the trees—and the gusts—a
redundant longing—in decline—all projects growing dim—hard
to return to—but trying—deceptive in their celibacy—deliberate,
narrowed—out of all approval—in memory—demanding—
whimpering—to unearth the splendor—of the path—conceptual or
curdled—I—right there in the month—leaves are showing—their
triumphant signals—luminous scatter—unaware—of other diverse
events—their meager capacity—for astonishment—barren ideas—
loosing themselves from—legitimate reception—and so content
to stutter vaguely—inside a meaningless hour—of lapsing—and
converging—the day beside us—shading—in the course of its
contention—which has withered—which has turned

BLUES FROM BED

Honor Moore

The blue cup
Landscape of blue mountain, yellow cloud
Blue bowl on the shell pink shelf
And a blue goat

Blue book at the end of a shelf
On the first day of the new year
A new self
Blue sky out the window, white snow

Sun striping indigo
Blue eye tilted or open
Of love, inadvertent
Lid recedes up cornea like a wave

Sleeving back to blue
Smoothed ripple sheen of ocean
Above a gentian mountain
You are my sky

Blue roof, marks for windows
At the end of the shelf a blue book
Than which no other book
Is as blue, bluer

Than glistery eyeskin
Nearly the turquoise certain days ocean is.
Blue at some distances unblues,
Creeps up beach

Bodies in water or love
Rub of blue glue on a girl's dove.
I like blue and white porcelain
Ginger jar lamp, sugar bowl

Your black eye is actually blue,
Loosened blood slid
Blue under pale skin, as a cup
Sky, eye, as blue as up.

SEMPRE

Paul Fattaruso

The great aroma,
perhaps the last
of the truly great
aromas, collapsed
in my nose, my
nose with its pitiful
library, my nose
packed with ash,
my boxer's nose,
my beagle's nose,
my nose returned
from the dance
alone, dogwood
blossoms on its
breath, my lit-up
nose, with a dying
waterfall for a lover,
my nose to be slept
with cautiously, my
nose was grown
wild among the great
strawberries of my
mother's generation,
stalked by bears, my
windswept nose,
my nose which travels
inside a basket of rice,
skeptical nose, nose

among ruined kites,
there is a photo of
my nose, there is a
rumor of it, my nose,
capped in silver, and
the silver reaching up
toward my eyelids.

from ITALIAN JOURNEY (1786–1788)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

NOVEMBER 24, 1786: ROME

All I can say about the Italians is this: they are children of Nature, who, for all the pomp and circumstance of their religion and art, are not a whit different from what they would be if they were still living in forests and caves. What strikes any foreigner are the murders which happen almost every day. In our quarter alone, there have been four in the last three weeks. Today again the whole city is talking of one, but it only talks. An honest artist called Schwendimann, a Swiss medallist and the last pupil of Hedlinger, was assaulted exactly like Winckelmann. His assailant, with whom he had got into a scuffle, stabbed him twenty times, and when the guards arrived, the villain stabbed himself. This is not the fashion here. Usually, the murderer takes sanctuary in a church, and that is the end of that.

Truth demands that I put some shadows into my rosy picture by reporting crimes, disasters, earthquakes and floods. Most of the foreigners are wildly excited over the present eruption of Vesuvius, and it takes a strong character not to be swept away oneself.

This natural phenomenon has something of the irresistible fascination of a rattlesnake. At the moment it seems as if all the art treasures of Rome were of no account; all the foreigners have interrupted their sightseeing tour and are hurrying off to Naples. But I shall resist the temptation and stay here, trusting that the mountain will keep something in reserve for me.

FEBRUARY 19, 1787: ROME

To my annoyance, I wasted the whole day among the fools. When night fell, I went for a walk in the Villa Medici to recover. The new moon is just

past. Next to its tenuous sickle, I could almost make out the dark portion of the disc with the naked eye, and through a telescope it was clearly visible. During the day a haze hovers over the earth like that I know from the drawings and paintings of Claude Lorrain, but this phenomenon cannot easily be seen in Nature more beautifully than here. The almond trees, blossoming among the dark-green oaks, are a new vision of grace. The sky is like a light-blue piece of taffeta, lit up by the sun. But how much more beautiful it will be in Naples! All this confirms my botanical fancies, and I am on the way to establishing important new relations and discovering the manner in which Nature, with incomparable power, develops the greatest complexity from the simple.

Vesuvius is throwing up stones and ashes, and at night people can see the summit glowing. I hope that ever-active Nature will make me the present of a flow of lava. I can hardly wait to make these mighty objects my own.

MARCH 2, 1787: NAPLES

Today I climbed Vesuvius, although the sky was overcast and the summit hidden in clouds. I took a carriage to Resina, where I mounted a mule and rode up the mountain through vineyards. Then I walked across the lava flow of 1771 which was already covered with a fine but tenacious moss, and then upward along its edge. High up on my left I could see the hermit's hut. Climbing the ash cone, which was two-thirds hidden in clouds, was not easy. At last I reached the old crater, now blocked, and came to the fresh lava flows, one two months, one two weeks, and one only five days old. This last had been feeble and had already cooled. I crossed it and climbed a hill of ashes which had been recently thrown up and was emitting fumes everywhere. As the smoke was drifting away from me, I decided to try and reach the crater. I had only taken fifty steps when the smoke became so dense that I could hardly see my shoes. The handkerchief I pressed over my mouth was no help. In addition, my guide had disappeared and my

steps on the little lava chunks which the eruption had discharged became more and more unsteady. I thought it better, therefore, to turn back and wait for a day with less cloud and less smoke. At least I now know how difficult it is to breathe in such an atmosphere.

Otherwise the mountain was perfectly calm, with none of the flames, rumbling or showers of stone there had been during the weeks before we arrived. Well, I have now made a reconnoiter, so that I can make my regular attack as soon as the weather clears.

Most of the types of lava I found were already known to me, but I discovered one phenomenon which struck me as unusual and which I intend to investigate more closely after I have consulted experts and collectors. This was the lining of a volcanic chimney which had once been plugged up, but then burst open and now juts out from the old filled-up crater. This hard, grayish, stalactitic mass seems to me to have been produced simply by the condensation of the finest volcanic vapors, unassisted by moisture or chemical action. This gives matter for further thought.

MARCH 6, 1787: NAPLES

Reluctantly, but out of loyal comradeship, Tischbein accompanied me today on my ascent of Vesuvius. To a cultured artist like him, who occupies himself only with the most beautiful human and animal forms and even humanizes the formless rocks and landscapes with feeling and taste, such a formidable, shapeless heap as Vesuvius, which again and again destroys itself and declares war on any sense of beauty, must appear loathsome.

We took two cabriolets, since we didn't trust ourselves to find our own way through the turmoil of the city. The driver shouted incessantly, "Make way! Make way!" as a warning to donkeys, burdened with wood or refuse, carriages going in the opposite direction, people walking bent down under their loads or just strolling, children and aged persons, to move aside so that he could keep up a sharp trot.

The outer suburbs and gardens already gave sign that we had entered the realm of Pluto. Since it had not rained for a long time, the leaves of the evergreens were coated with a thick layer of ash-grey dust; roofs, fascias and every flat surface were equally grey; only the beautiful blue sky and the powerful sun overhead gave witness that we were still among the living. At the foot of the steep slope we were met by two guides, one elderly, one youngish, but both competent men. The first took me in charge, the second Tischbein, and they hauled us up the mountain. I say "hauled," because each guide wears a stout leather thong around his waist; the traveler grabs on to this and is hauled up, at the same time guiding his own feet with the help of a stick.

In this manner we reached the flat base from which the cone rises. Facing us in the north was the debris of the Somma. One glance westward over the landscape was like a refreshing bath, and the physical pains and fatigue of our climb were forgotten. We then walked round the cone, which was still smoking and ejecting stones and ashes. So long as there was space enough to remain at a safe distance, it was a grand, uplifting spectacle. After a tremendous, thundering roar which came out of the depth of the cauldron, thousands of stones, large and small, and enveloped in clouds of dust, were hurled into the air. Most of them fell back into the abyss, but the others made an extraordinary noise as they hit the outer wall of the cone. First came the heavier ones, struck with a dull thud and hopped down the slope, then the lighter rattled down after them and, last, a rain of ash descended. This all took place at regular intervals, which we could calculate exactly by counting slowly.

However, the space between the cone and the Somma gradually narrowed till we were surrounded by fallen stones which made walking uncomfortable. Tischbein grew more depressed than ever when he saw that the monster, not content with being ugly, was now threatening to become dangerous as well. But there is something about an imminent danger which challenges Man's spirit of contradiction to defy it, so I thought to myself that it might be possible to climb the cone, reach the

mouth of the crater and return, all in the interval between two eruptions. While we rested safely under the shelter of a projecting rock and refreshed ourselves with the provisions we had brought with us, I consulted our guides. The younger one felt confident that we could risk it; we lined our hats with linen and silk handkerchiefs, I grabbed his belt, and, sticks in hand, we set off.

The smaller stones were still clattering, the ashes still falling about us as the vigorous youth hauled me up the glowing screes. There we stood on the lip of the enormous mouth; a light breeze blew the smoke away from us but also veiled the interior of the crater; steam rose all around us from thousands of fissures; now and then we could glimpse the cracked rock walls. The sight was neither instructive nor pleasing, but this was only because we could not see anything, so we delayed in the hope of seeing more. We had forgotten to keep our slow count and were standing on a sharp edge of the monstrous abyss when, all of a sudden, thunder shook the mountain and a terrific charge flew past us. We ducked instinctively, as if that would save us when the shower of stones began. The smaller stones had already finished clattering down when, having forgotten that another interval had begun, and happy to have survived, we reached the foot of the cone under a rain of ashes which thickly coated our hats and shoulders.

After an affectionate scolding from Tischbein and some refreshment, I was able to make a careful examination of both the older and the fresher lavas. The older guide could pick them out and give the exact year of each. The more ancient were already covered with ash and quite smooth; the more recent, especially those which had flowed more sluggishly, looked very peculiar.

When lava flows sluggishly, the surface cools into solid masses. From time to time some obstruction brings these to a standstill. The masses behind are borne forward on the molten stream beneath and forced over the stationary ones. This process is repeated again and again until finally the whole flow petrifies in jagged shapes. Something similar happens

with ice floes on a river, but it looks odder in lava. Among the formless melted products there were some large chunks which, on fracture, showed a resemblance to a type of more primitive rock. The guides maintained that they were old lavas from the lowest depths of the volcano which it expels from time to time.

On our way back to Naples I noticed some one-storey little houses constructed in a curious way without windows; the only light the rooms receive comes through the door opening on to the street. From early morning until late into the night, the occupants sit outside until it is time to retire into their caves.

This city, which, even in the evening, is in an uproar too, though one of a somewhat different kind, makes me wish I could stay here longer to make such sketches as I can of its animated scenes. But nothing so nice, I fear, is likely to happen.

MARCH 11, 1787: NAPLES

Since my stay in Naples is not going to be a long one, I visit the more distant points of interest first; those nearby offer themselves of their own accord. As Tischbein and I drove to Pompeii, we saw on every hand many views which we knew well from drawings, but now they were all fitted together into one splendid landscape.

Pompeii surprises everyone by its compactness and its smallness of scale. The streets are narrow, though straight and provided with pavements, the houses small and windowless—their only light comes from their entrances and open arcades—and even the public buildings, the bench tomb at the town gate, the temple and a villa nearby look more like architectural models or dolls' houses than real buildings. But their rooms, passages and arcades are gaily painted. The walls have plain surfaces with richly detailed frescoes painted on them, most of which have now deteriorated. These frescoes are surrounded by amusing arabesques in admirable taste: from one, enchanting figures of children and nymphs

evolve, in another, wild and tame animals emerge out of luxuriant floral wreaths. Though the city, first buried under a rain of ashes and stones and then looted by the excavators, is now completely destroyed, it still bears witness to an artistic instinct and a love of art shared by a whole people, which even the most ardent art lover today can neither feel nor understand and desire.

Considering the distance between Pompeii and Vesuvius, the volcanic debris which buried the city cannot have been driven here, either by the explosive force of the eruption or by a strong wind: my own conjecture is that the stones and ashes must have remained suspended in the air for some time, like clouds, before they descended upon the unfortunate city.

To picture more clearly what must have happened historically one should think of a mountain village buried in snow. The spaces between the buildings, and even the buildings themselves, crushed under the weight of the fallen material, were buried and invisible, with perhaps a wall sticking up here and there; sooner or later, people took this mound over and planted vineyards and gardens on it. It was probably peasants digging on their allotments who made the first important treasure hauls.

The mummified city left us with a curious, rather disagreeable impression, but our spirits began to recover as we sat in the pergola of a modest inn looking out over the sea, and ate a frugal meal. The blue sky and the glittering sea enchanted us, and we left hoping that, on some future day, when this little arbor was covered with vine leaves, we would meet there again and enjoy ourselves.

As we approached Naples, the little houses struck me as being perfect copies of the houses in Pompeii. We asked permission to enter one and found it very clean and neatly furnished—nicely woven cane chairs and a chest which had been gilded all over and painted with brightly colored flowers and then varnished. Despite the lapse of so many centuries and such countless changes, this region still imposes on its inhabitants the same habits, tastes, amusements and style of living.

MARCH 20, 1787: NAPLES

The news that another emission of lava had just occurred, invisible to Naples since it was flowing towards Ottaiano, tempted me to make a third visit to Vesuvius. On reaching the foot of the mountain, I had hardly jumped down from my two-wheeled, one-horse vehicle before the two guides who had accompanied us the last time appeared on the scene and I hired them both.

When we reached the cone, the elder one stayed with our coats and provisions while the younger followed me. We bravely made our way towards the enormous cloud of steam which was issuing from a point halfway below the mouth of the cone. Having reached it, we descended carefully along its edge. The sky was clear and at last, through the turbulent clouds of steam, we saw the lava stream.

It was only about ten feet wide, but the manner in which it flowed down the very gentle slope was most surprising. The lava on both sides of the stream cools as it moves, forming a channel. The lava on its bottom also cools, so that this channel is constantly being raised. The stream keeps steadily throwing off to right and left the scoria floating on its surface. Gradually, two levels of considerable height are formed, between which the fiery stream continues to flow quietly like a mill brook. We walked along the foot of this embankment while the scoria kept steadily rolling down its sides. Occasionally there were gaps through which we could see the glowing mass from below. Further down, we were also able to observe it from above.

Because of the bright sunshine, the glow of the lava was dulled. Only a little smoke rose into the pure air. I felt a great desire to get near the place where the lava was issuing from the mountain. My guide assured me that this was safe, because the moment it comes forth, a flow forms a vaulted roof of cooled lava over itself, which he had often stood on. To have this experience, we again climbed up the mountain in order to approach the

spot from the rear. Luckily, a gust of wind had cleared the air, though not entirely, for all around us puffs of hot vapor were emerging from thousands of fissures. By now we were actually standing on the lava crust, which lay twisted in coils like a soft mush, but it projected so far out that we could not see the lava gushing forth.

We tried to go half a dozen steps further, but the ground under our feet became hotter and hotter and a whirl of dense fumes darkened the sun and almost suffocated us. The guide who was walking in front turned back, grabbed me, and we stole away from the hellish cauldron.

After refreshing our eyes with the view and our throats with wine, we wandered about observing other features of this peak of hell which towers up in the middle of paradise. I inspected some more volcanic flues and saw that they were lined up to the rim with pendent, tapering formations of some stalactitic matter. Thanks to the irregular shape of the flues, some of these deposits were in easy reach, and with the help of our sticks and some hooked appliances we managed to break off some pieces. At the lava dealer's, I had already seen similar ones, listed as true lavas, so I felt happy at having made a discovery. They were a volcanic soot, precipitated from the hot vapors; the condensed minerals they contained were clearly visible.

A magnificent sunset and evening lent their delight to the return journey. However, I could feel how confusing such a tremendous contrast must be. The Terrible beside the Beautiful, the Beautiful beside the Terrible, cancel one another out and produce a feeling of indifference. The Neapolitan would certainly be a different creature if he did not feel himself wedged between God and the Devil.

JUNE 1, 1787: NAPLES

The Marchese Lucchesini has arrived, and on his account I have postponed my departure for a few days. It was a real pleasure to make his acquaintance. He impressed me as being one of those people who have a sound moral digestion which allows them to enjoy themselves at the great world

banquet, whereas a person like myself sometimes overeats like a ruminant, and then must chew and chew for a long time before he can take another bite. I also liked his wife very much; she is a good German soul.

I shall be glad to leave Naples; indeed, I must leave. During these last days I have done nothing but pay courtesy calls. Most of the people I met were interesting and I do not regret the hours I spent with them, but another two weeks and all my plans would be upset. Furthermore, the longer one stays here, the idler one gets. Apart from the treasures of Portici, I have seen very little since my return from Paestum. There is still a lot I ought to see, but I don't feel in the mood to stir a foot. The Portici museum is the alpha and omega of all collections of antiquities. It makes one realize how far superior to us the ancient world was in artistic instinct, even though it was far behind us in solid craftsmanship.



The servant I hired to bring me my passport said he was sorry to see me go, and told me that the great lava stream which has just issued from Vesuvius is moving towards the sea; it has already reached a point far down the steeper slopes and may well reach the shore in a few days. This news has put me in a dilemma. I have spent the whole day paying farewell visits which I owed to people; there have been many of them who have been kind and helpful to me, and I can guess what tomorrow will be like. When traveling, it is impossible to avoid social life altogether, but the truth is, I can do nothing for these people, and they get in the way of the things which really matter to me. I am in a black mood.

JUNE 1. EVENING

My round of thank-you visits was not without pleasure and profit; I was shown several things which I had neglected. Cavaliere Venuti even let me see some hidden treasures. I took another reverent look at his priceless,

though mutilated, Ulysses, and together we paid a farewell visit to the porcelain works, where I lingered over the Hercules and the beautiful Campanian vases.

He was most affectionate when we parted, and said that he only wished I did not have to leave him so soon. My banker, too, at whose house I arrived just at dinnertime, would not let me go. This would have been all very well if my thoughts had not been running on lava all the time. I was still settling bills, packing and doing this and that when night began to fall, and I hurried to the Molo to watch the lights and their trembling reflections in the agitated sea, the full moon in all its glory, the flying sparks of the volcano and, above all, the lava, which had not been there two nights ago, moving on its fiery, relentless way.

I thought of driving out to see it, but this would have been complicated to arrange and it would have been morning before I got there. Besides, I did not want impatience to spoil my present enjoyment, so I stayed where I was, sitting on the Molo, oblivious of the passing crowds, their explanations, stories, comparisons and senseless arguments about the direction the lava would take, until I could no longer keep my eyes open.

JUNE 2

Another beautiful day, spent usefully and pleasantly, no doubt, with admirable people, but against my will and with a heavy heart. All the time I looked longingly at the cloud of smoke as it slowly moved towards the sea, indicating hour by hour the advance of the lava. Even my evening was not to be free. I had promised to visit the Duchess of Giovene, who is living in the royal palace. I climbed stairs and wandered along many corridors, the uppermost of which was obstructed by chests, closets and all the impedimenta of a court wardrobe, and was shown into a room which was large and lofty but not particularly spectacular. There I found an attractive young lady whose conversation revealed her to be a person of delicacy and refinement. Born in Germany, she is familiar with the

development of our literature towards a more liberal and clear-sighted humanism. She especially admires everything Herder is doing and the lucid intellect of Garve. She has tried to keep up with the women writers of Germany, and it was obvious from what she said that she would like to become a famous writer herself and influence young ladies of noble birth—such a conversation is without beginning or end. No candles had been brought in, though it was already twilight and the window shutters were closed. We were walking up and down the room, when, all of a sudden, she flung open a shutter. If she meant to give me a surprise, she certainly succeeded, for the sight was such as one sees only once in a lifetime. The window at which we were standing was on the top floor, directly facing Vesuvius. The sun had set some time before, and the glow of the lava, which lit up its accompanying cloud of smoke, was clearly visible. The mountain roared, and at each eruption the enormous pillar of smoke above it was rent asunder as if by lightning, and in the glare, the separate clouds of vapor stood out in sculptured relief. From the summit to the sea ran a streak of molten lava and glowing vapor, but everywhere else sea, earth, rock and vegetation lay peaceful in the enchanting stillness of a fine evening, while the full moon rose from behind the mountain ridge. It was an overwhelming sight.

From the point where we were standing, though it was impossible to discern every detail of the picture, the whole could be taken in at a glance. For a time we watched in silence, and when we resumed our conversation, it took a more intimate turn. We had before our eyes a text to comment on, for which millennia would be too short. As the night advanced, every detail of the landscape stood out ever more clearly; the moon shone like a second sun; with the aid of a moderately strong lens, I even thought I could see the fragments of glowing rock as they were ejected from the abyss of the cone. My hostess, as I shall call her, since I have seldom eaten a more exquisite supper, had ordered the candles to be placed on the side of the room away from the window. Sitting in the foreground of this incredible picture with the moonlight falling on her face, she looked

more beautiful than ever, and her loveliness was enhanced for me by the charming German idiom in which she spoke. I forgot completely how late it was till, at last, she had to ask me to leave because in a short while the doors would be locked as they are in a convent. And so to beauty, both near and distant, I bade a reluctant farewell, but blessing the Fates who, at its close, had so wonderfully rewarded me for a day unwillingly spent in being polite.

When I got outside, I thought to myself that, after all, a closer view of this great lava stream would only have been a repetition of the small one I did see, and that the evening I had spent was the only possible conclusion to my stay in Naples. Instead of going home at once, I started walking towards the Molo with the intention of seeing the great spectacle with a different foreground. I don't know how it was—perhaps it was weariness after such a full day, perhaps a feeling that I ought not to spoil the beautiful picture I had just seen by any more looking—but I changed my mind and went back to Morconi's. There I found Kniep, who had come over from his new lodgings to pay me an evening visit, and we discussed our future relations over a bottle of wine. I promised him that as soon as I was able to exhibit some of his work in Germany, I would recommend him to the Duke of Gotha, who would probably give him commissions, and so, as close friends who look forward to a fruitful cooperation in the future, we said goodbye to each other.

Translated from the German by W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer.

OUR NOW APARTMENT

Karen Leona Anderson

Our now apartment is so. It ups
and goes. We adore it green and cream,
and kitty-up the window is mostly shut,
I hope. I know I think it knows us,
and does the panther lope around the rim
of the new one? Sure can if she wishes
to. Sashay bluish and learn some
stripey silver kits in it. Aufwiedersehen,
cantaloupe! Sorely missed, dimmer
switch. We see it but we fold:
stone to rhine, our no to kiss our yes.

begin

odd with possibility
a whole summer slips by

the sky from here and

milk net
dark cloud

holes we fall
through and through

missing;
our imagined life

drifting

the blue boat in the harbor

solitude

it comes down to this this and this

when everything is done
nipped at the

you knew
this

red

all the rest
dark cloud

so, what about "this" surprises you?

the same inside

faces unfinished
lift over the shoulder
lifetime weather

boundary

it was

you knew
this

it is hard to participate in someone else's nostalgia.

i'm talking to you the way
some people talk to god,

i watch you being yourself

how to cloud inside you

"

we're in new york -

even plants offer themselves across a
boundary

this morning began with a flood

it was a relief to see a manifestation

now we're talking

i have spent most of the day pulling certain weeds from certain
cracks my neighbor said a weed is anything in the wrong place
i'm worried i am
but i'll wait it out

i have no screen and my curtains are blowing in wildly
sipping light outside quietly

does my hand-mind-?

do you have your own space?

do we write for the space of the eardrum?
the eye?

the negative space
a body makes in a room?

einstein wrote that you cannot use the same
thinking that caused the problem to solve
the problem

in a floor

in

write me a letter a long one

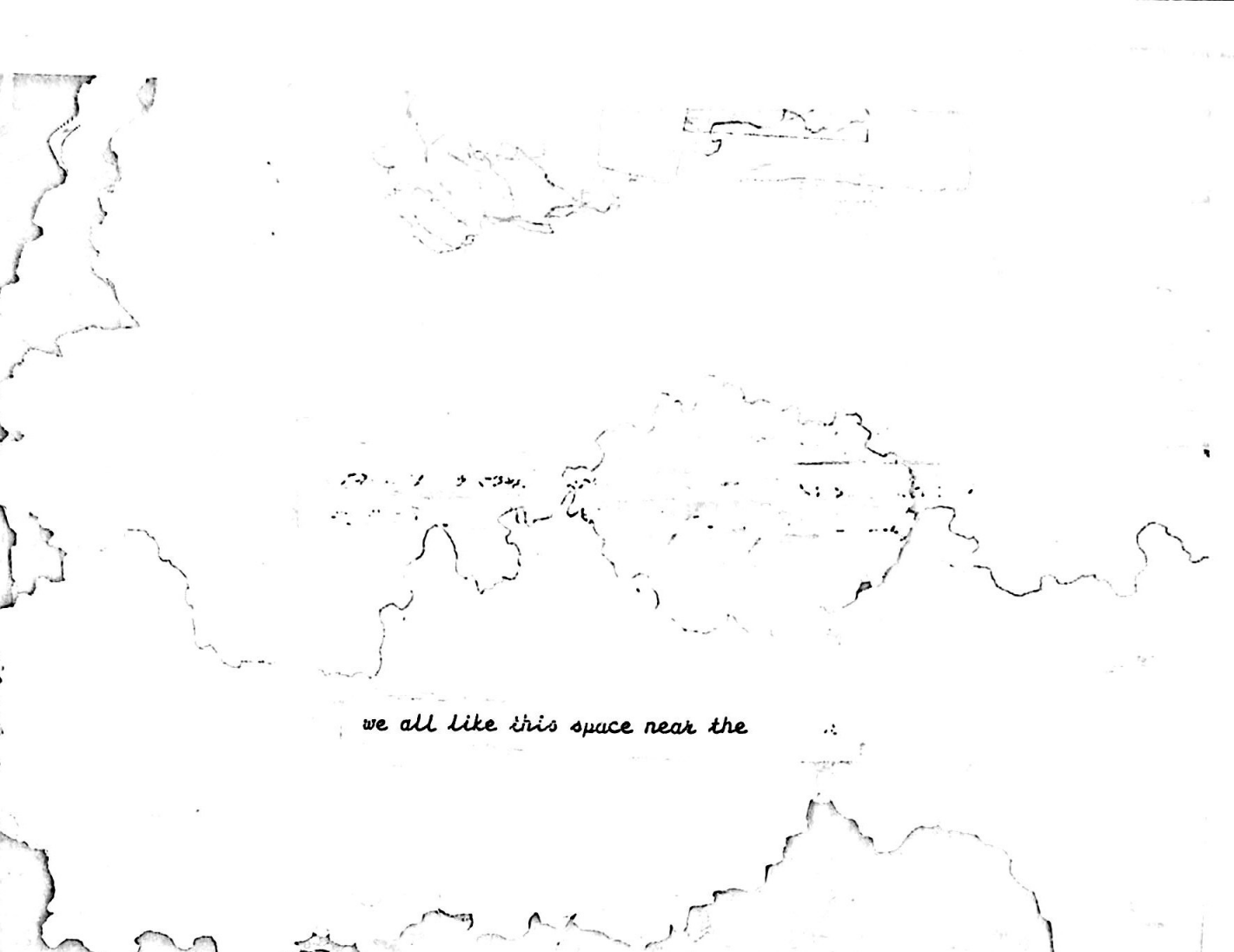
with entrails horses
trombones

write the space

without person or number

break the voice

break in



we all like this space near the

canvas

the park

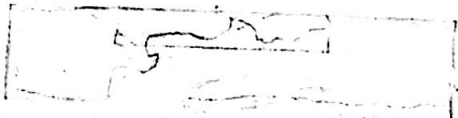
a pattern for anything is difficult to convey

a mother is more or less a fixed point

to this .

small boy in red trousers

it



parents
planets

across the plains
like noonday moons

canvas

a breath drawn infinitely

project

the slowest film

(you)

downward facing cloud

who looks direct in
craving shadow.

breasts, cloth, halves, salt, lace,
and often eyes, as they roll back

a small bird shudders with hunger

cloud the edge we come to -

life is there
painfully there

feeling everything
nothing
somewhere

the air is gone
they are wide open
i can see inside them
they are drawing air

a throat knows the difference

a throat knows where to put things

could be a throat

could be a throat

A SUITABLE CREDENZA

Richard Meier

The jade earrings in the end have descended
(as a nude or river catches up to itself)
into the plains from the plains and
will return there. I like a cushion for my chair.
The war came after a couple of mistakes
about the date of conception. As the saint in the desert
said *today* more times than it lasted
and thus mortalized the one constant subsequent to the star
that found us
that day lying in a daze across a rut. Visible
in the tragedy was the muddy road
(a dead baby that didn't look anything like us,
though it was ours, sort of, not in part)
by which we would return to our former selves
with new lives, having banked on the reverse.
We lay in the grass on the side long enough, head toward the dark,
for it to break a little while before getting up.

But the wind strikes the bushes anyway like a band
of color around a white jar, the one the river left half-filled with mud,
and you washed out one summer to fill with that fall's
drying weeds and stalks. The skin of one in the morning sun
like a coin casts light instead of shadow like a man
who speaks with an indecipherable accent
to be understood but is because there are others around.
I brush my teeth several times a day and more
if I am going to meet new people. Your wife is going
to go swimming also, though this isn't clear unless there is a wedding.

The situation gives birth to a legitimation problem
solved when someone recognizes you as a stranger.
It's the regularity of the passage that frightens,
ducks clustered around the only hole for miles in the river's ice
in the manner of a Greek tragedy's audience, the actors
lost again beneath the current this slight wind
judging by the ripples you notice has again defeated.

ARDOR, A DECLENSION

This summer is so much sadder than the other.

—VLADIMIR NABOKOV

Sliding backwards on ice the dream (having seen that I would stop at the beginning of the next chapter and continued through the first few sentences, revealing X, in the form of a stout lad in a blue jacket, bowing to my beloved) in an academic police car, formerly corner of Y and Z, miraculously turning the car 180 in order that back became front, and I could navigate more easily the reversal, woven (not forgetting the dream's agency) through the familiar, oncoming traffic with headlights whose icicle arrays burst into diamonds the sky was chock full of. And two scorpions, who walk backwards and sting forwards, I crushed with a chair till they broke into smaller and more deadly pieces. The rubber plant leans over and new growth straight up out of the hurricane horizontal palm of its mistaken direction ascends. Dear sister, I've rescinded my promise, and parked with door open, my squad car a taxi.

3:54 AM PACIFIC DAYLIGHT TIME

Juliana Leslie

I want astronomy I want you snowshoe

and evensong I want persimmon

Who is patchwork and also emerald

who is diamond

I want you raspberry I want whatever

I wear a swimsuit to the edge of town

I want you to see me

watery medium human being

planetarium

What I want in music is therefore Alaska

only different

I want you cinematographer

make me a picture

We are sleeping under the wool tonight

of California under the stars

I love

who assumes the shape of an elephant

who sounds like herself who hopes for the best

who laughs and laughs

in the middle of nowhere

a summer room where I shall picnic

If it's not too much

to touch the edge of something

to be skyways

and lifelike

I AM A SINGING TELEGRAM

Mathias Svalina

I am a singing telegram. To hold my low-slung flats you must speak to my brother, & to touch my kiss curl the wind must curl the dead pigeons.

You want to know about my childhood? I am a singing telegram. I am a former child star. I was a spelling bee champion, oblivious to the pain involved in incorrect morality.

Will you remain apocopic? Will you fix me blueberry pancakes? Come sing with me & the detritivores & the Hellevores. Your swollen lips are so wet from licking with your licorice-black tongue.

from JOURNEY TO ARMENIA

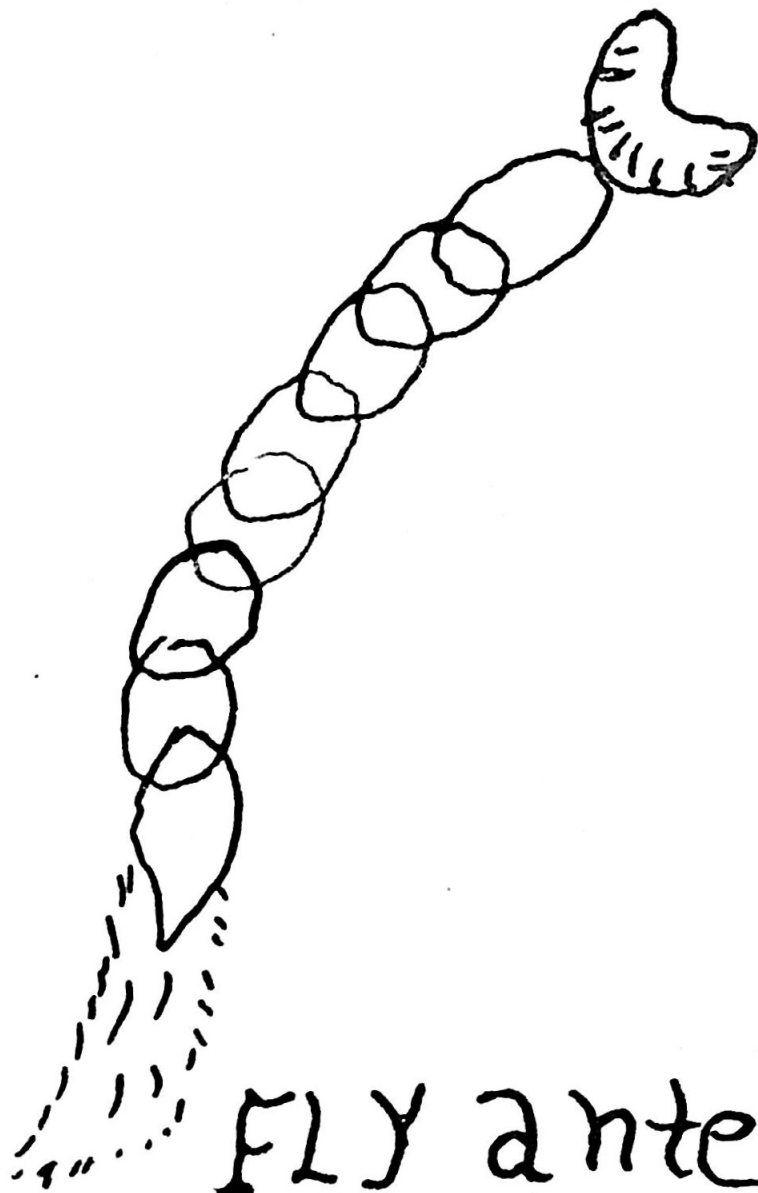
Osip Mandelstam

I was shy, as though I was in a palace.

1. The body of Arshak is unwashed and his beard has grown wild.
2. The king's fingernails are broken and woodlice crawl over his face.
3. His ears grew stupid by the silence but once they had listened to Greek music.
4. His tongue became mangy from the food of the jailers but there was a time when it pressed grape to his palate and was as deft as the tip of a flautist's tongue.
5. Arshak's seed has withered on the scrotum and his voice is thin, like the bleating of a sheep.
6. King Shapukh—thinks Arshak—has got the upper hand over me and, worse than that, he has taken my air for himself.
7. The Assyrian is holding my heart.
8. He lords over my hair and my fingernails. He grows my beard and swallows my saliva—so accustomed is he to the thought that I dwell here in the fortress of Anush.
9. The people of Kushan rose up against Shapukh.
10. They broke through the border at an undefended place like silken lace.

11. The onslaught of the Kushan pricked and upset the King Shapukh, like an eyelash that has fallen in an eye.
12. The enemies battled on both sides, squinting so they wouldn't see each other.
13. A certain Drastamat, the most educated and amiable of the eunuchs, was at the middle of the Shapukh's forces; he encouraged the commander of the cavalry, ingratiated himself with the sovereign, then led him, like a chess figure, out of danger and remained within full view the whole time.
14. He had been governor of the Andekh province in the days when Arshak gave out orders in a velvet voice.
15. Yesterday he was king but today he has fallen through a crack, hunched up in the womb like a youngling, warmed by lice and taking pleasure in itching.
16. When it had come to the award ceremony, Drastamat put a request into the sharp ears of the Assyrian, which tickled them like a feather:
17. Give me entrance to the fortress of Anyush. I want Arshak to spend one additional day full of listening, tasting and smelling, as it was before when he amused himself with hunting and took trouble over the planting of trees.

Translated from the Russian by Natasha Randall.



FLY antenna.

INTERVIEW WITH COLE SWENSEN

Cole Swensen is the author of nine books: National Book Award finalist *Goest* (Alice James, 2004), *Such Rich Hour* (2001), *Oh* (2000), *Try* (1999), *Noon* (1997), *Numen* (1995), *Park* (1991), *New Math* (1988), and *It's Alive She Says*. She has won the New American Poetry Series Award, the National Poetry Series, the San Francisco State Poetry Center Book Award, the Iowa Poetry Prize, and the PEN USA Award. Her many translations of French literature include Pierre Alferi's *OXO* (2004), Jean Frémon's *Island of the Dead* (2003), Oliver Cadior's *Art Poetic* (1999), and Jean Tortel's *Interrmittances II*. She lives in Paris, Washington, D.C., and Iowa City, where she is a permanent faculty member of the Iowa Writer's Workshop. This interview was conducted by Robert N. Casper in New York's Washington Square Park in April, 2005.

Your poems engage in avant-garde practices and yet address classical themes—opera, Renaissance and Medieval painting, and so on. Can you talk about this unusual pairing of form and content?

I think—without thinking it out consciously—that what I'm after is a tension of a certain kind, one that transforms into *attention*, that keeps the poem attentive to itself. On the other hand, I think such pairings are becoming less unusual. Late 20th century work, particularly that of many Language and post-Language writers, opened up what used to be thought of as the avant-garde, and now we see many of those moves—fragmentation, juxtaposition, use of page space, slippery “I”—frequently in different combinations and addressing many, many different subjects. I find the current field of hybridity and active construction really exciting. In my case, the blend allows me to play around with language, yet also to explore a topic out there in the world. At some point, I found that poetry was a great way of getting into interesting subjects much more deeply.

Can you talk a little bit about that point? When and how it happened?

In 1991 when I was writing a book titled *Park*, I sat in a park—the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris—and used writing to keep me actively experiencing the park—again, it was a kind of attention; it kept my senses focused on what was right in front of me. Writing about things changes your relationship to them—it sounds extremely banal when put that way, but that’s what it amounts to. Writing about the park allowed me to develop an intricate relationship with the park. I began using writing intentionally in this way when I wrote *Try* in 1995. I had a translation grant from the French government that came with a free pass to the Louvre, and as I lived two or three blocks behind the museum, I went every day, and found that when I wrote about the paintings, I looked at them differently—longer and from more perspectives.

Did you look at the paintings first and write in response to them, or did you begin processing your experience of looking at them by writing?

I would look at them for five minutes or so, and then start writing on them. But it would quickly become a loop, with the looking inciting the writing, which would in turn incite a deeper looking. The writing really became a mode of seeing. I would stand in the museum and write on the spot for ten to fifteen minutes per painting, and then revise at home. I often went back to certain ones to develop an aspect or theme, which would in turn send me in search of other paintings with the same theme or by the same painter, so I felt as though I was using writing as a mode of overflowing a given painting into others.

*Has that been your *modus operandi*?*

Yes, pretty much, though it’s not always visual art that I’m working with. For instance, I used precisely that method while writing the two

Cy Twombly pieces in *Goest*—I stood in front of his sculptures at an exhibition at the National Gallery in Washington. But the central section of that book was written in conversation with a late 18th century encyclopedia “of manufacture and invention” (as the subtitle phrases it). I “looked at” the encyclopedia just as I might have at a painting, and found that writing on it gave me new ways of interacting with it, of getting more thoroughly involved. I was particularly intrigued by the incredibly diverse things the encyclopedist chose to focus on—streetlights, mirrors, artificial ice, naptha. Diverse, and yet almost everything he chose had a white or luminous or transparent aspect, which made the poems go oddly well with a series of poems I’d been writing on white and on ghostliness.

The ghostly seems a theme that goes through much of your work—the book Oh for instance seems to have a touch of it—particularly in the bareness, the emptiness of the page space when talking about a subject that is so aurally lush.

You’re quite right. I was thinking very much about the stage in that book, and the page as a stage, and then trying to locate the voice upon it. Opera plays a lot with dislocated voice, from the chorus to off-stage, and in fact, I think the voice—whether actual or metaphoric—is always difficult to pin down (ventriloquism is the norm, not the exception), and that’s part of what haunts opera. Opera is always haunted. It’s haunted by all the previous performances of any given opera itself, and it’s haunted by the death of women, which always brings it to a close, and yet without ending the voice. The voice comes back. So I wanted a page that would show voices coming out of nowhere or everywhere at once—which is to say, out of a field (a section of the world) rather than out of a point (a single person).

Your mention of Oh is interesting in light of the way history comes into play in your work. We as readers are aware of what’s going to happen, and that sets up both a longing and a fear. It’s a confusion of the historical and the contemporary.

Yes, and of course today is actually composed of the past, so no matter how distant any moment is, it's also still here in the present. That's also what keeps the haunting going.

Do you relate differently to art from antiquity and contemporary art?

Maybe it's facile to say, but it seems to me that, just like a moment, a piece of art is not a resident of a certain time. When we look at something from the 15th century, we're looking at it today—it's a part of today. On the other hand, as I say, that's a little facile, because with any visual art, a brush stroke or a detail of someone's hand can make you feel like you're getting an uncanny glance back several centuries. That said, the art that most fascinates me is either pre-Renaissance or post-Impressionist, so with all their differences, they have radical distortion in common—they're both types of representation that emphasize *presentation*—that recreate what they look at.

But I don't mean to deny their differences, and I do relate to them differently; that's what's behind the great pleasure of taking works from different eras and putting them side by side. Opera does this—it often puts a two hundred year-old libretto into contemporary costumes. This is another instance of the mixing of avant-garde surfaces with classic subject matter that you talked about earlier—it's a blending of incongruencies in the belief that they'll not only enrich each other, but will also exceed themselves into some new thing.

It seems like a postmodern practice.

In that unlikely pairings always seem postmodern; they've almost become the icon of the postmodern—as if ours is, above all, an era of incongruities. As I'm a product of this historical moment, it shows up in my work. I look at everything through the lens of 2005—this year, at least. It all looks very post-Gertrude Stein, post-Language poetry. This gives my work a surface

that not only blends the incongruous, but also that is fractured, and those fractures crack subject matter open. Which you could say is just a visual metaphor, but I think juxtapositions and broken syntax open a subject to a different kind of view. Through the cracks, we can see aspects that have not yet been articulated and can get intimations of what those articulations might be. Broken language is often not in the process of breaking further down, but of building up, heading toward fuller expressions, heading toward articulations that have not been previously achieved.

In Goest you include more expository syntax than in previous books—can you talk about that move away from lyric condensation?

It's part of that process of building up rather than breaking down. For a long time I've been trying to write in a hybrid form that includes an expository tone, almost an art-critical tone, in order to be able to make abstract or evaluative statements while also remaining very directly *in* and *on the surface of* language. *Oh* originally included large sections of expository discussion about opera, but I took them all out because, frankly, they didn't work. In *Try*, I also took out huge chunks, and in *Such Rich Hour* as well. So, with *Goest* I forced myself to leave them in and make them work, but could only do so by making them more poetic than expository. In another current project titled *The Glass Age*, which focuses on Pierre Bonnard's window paintings, I kept large sections of truly expository language mixed in among an otherwise fairly fractured poetic surface.

All of these projects are grappling with the dichotomy of language as information (in which case, it's a vehicle) and language as an art material (in which case it's not). These two modes are not entirely mutually exclusive, and I'm trying to increase the ground they can hold in common. I'm working on this a lot in my current project, which is a book on 17th century French gardens and a garden designer named André Le Nôtre. The book is titled *Ours* because "le nôtre" in French means "ours." There's a lovely irony in that all of Le Nôtre's gardens were designed and built for aristocrats, and now they're almost all public parks.

In contrast to the high modernists—Pound and Eliot—your poems are more explicit in their referents.

I've always found that Pound's work, particularly with the *Cantos*, laces you through half a library by the time you're done—the referent grows and grows. I like that very much, but it's not what I do; more and more, I find myself focused on a precise thing and trying to use writing to reel it into the present, into presence. Which, of course, is well known to be impossible, writing being the guarantee of absence, but poetry is always involved one way or another with this paradox.

Your poems are both aurally and visually arresting—how do you think both elements work in a poem?

I think kinetics joins the two. When I read, I feel I'm traveling the page, and of course, the eye is always literally traveling. And rhythms, too, of course, travel. I try to use them very purposefully, whether they trip down the page, or drift, or race. We feel this traveling as a kinetic impulse in the muscles, and we feel sound relationships in a similar way. It is in that kinetic sensation that the eye and the ear become fused, bringing the whole body into play subconsciously. Without attention to the dynamics of sound and sight, the poem remains in the mind—which is fine; most writing remains in the mind, but poetry seems to me to be precisely the potential of writing that can be read with the entire body.

I heard you used to tap out your poems when you read them aloud!

I still do it, but now I do it somewhere that's not visible. Perhaps it's to record that slight way in which a poem is also a dance.

I'm fascinated when poets connect body movements to their work.

And display it, too. All language is, to some degree, a performance. That's a different way (and no doubt something of a travesty) of interpreting J.L. Austin's theories of performative language—of extending that to the body in time. A poem's primary reference is the body. It goes out in the world, yes, but it is also an action. It is something lived.

Your mother was a painter—did you ever think of becoming a painter yourself?

No—she was a marvelous painter, and still does a lot in the arts, and has been a strong and wonderful influence all my life. But, I always knew I wanted to be a writer, and I've always enjoyed writing—and by that I don't mean just putting words together; I've also always enjoyed the physical act of writing. I've found this is true with many writers: they enjoy the physical gesture. Many also love the feel of different pens, or experimenting with inks, or studying calligraphy. The physical act of writing is a great pleasure, and it's particularly important for poets because it's the sensation of the word infusing the entire body, of emanating from the entire body—or at least from the hands as well as from the mind and mouth.

Given your essay "Poetry City" in identitytheory.com, I have to ask: what city do your poems most resemble?

Paris. Or that's the city I want them to because that's the city I feel most responsive to. It's a walkable city, and I try to get something of walking into a lot of my work. However, that essay was at least a little bit tongue-in-cheek.

I loved the fact that the essay took a pretty wild idea and ran with it. Of course, I thought you would say your poems are like Paris, for obvious reasons—and because Paris is a city in which history and modernity are constantly at odds, not only in an architectural sense, but in a cultural and philosophical sense as well.

Is “at odds” the right term here? I think that often—and Paris is particularly good at this—history and modernity collaborate. Which makes me think of architecture and change—what happens in cities where different people own the apartments in large, old buildings. A given building might have been built in 1750, and in one apartment, the floor might date from 1850, while the kitchen was redone in 2002—that sort of thing. Or one apartment might have been completely gutted and redone in 2000, while another down the hall hasn’t been renovated since 1930. So you have the sense that different eras are living together. We think of the city as a heap, a pile of difference—just things jumbled up with no plan. But it’s time, too, that’s jumbled up.

What does having dual residences in the U.S. and Paris mean for you?

It means that I spend a lot of time on planes! No, in truth, I like it very much—and I actually live in three places: Iowa, where I teach; Washington D.C., where I live with my husband; and Paris, where we spend summers and a bit in winter. I would always want to live in more than one place because it keeps you acutely aware of detail; you don’t take customs for granted. I particularly like going back and forth between France and the United States because the approach to poetry—what is deemed worth doing, experimenting with, paying attention to—is different in each country. Yet there are commonalities, and I know many writers in each country who do a lot with the other’s literature. Poets such as Gertrude Stein, George Oppen, and Louis Zukofsky influenced a certain stripe of contemporary French poetry, and whether or not people realize it, Baudelaire is incredibly important to the American notion of modernity, and much early 20th century American literature was literally *written* in France—the influence in both directions is subtle and pervasive.

You certainly connect French and American literary traditions through your translations. I'd like to talk about the formal challenges of translating—especially a work like Pierre Alferi's OXO.

In a formal sense translating OXO was easy, because it was absolutely determined: seven poems per section, seven lines per poem, seven syllables per line. I tried out permutation after permutation; because of the formal constraint, that project made me more aware than ever that anything can be said, if not in infinite ways, at least in six or seven. And Pierre was an incredible help. He went through the first draft with me and made sure that I at least understood the poems—even in the French, the logic is often masterfully intricate. He also told me the background behind each one. If I can talk to the writer and get him or her going—“Tell me about this poem, and tell me things you don't think have anything to do with it”—it creates a zone I can work from.

The most interesting problems always show up where you don't think they're going to. When I translated Jean Frémon's novel *Island of the Dead*, I thought that the form would not be a problem—it's a novel; it's done paragraph by paragraph. But I soon realized I'd have to take Frémon's sentences apart and teach myself to write them. He has an almost Jamesian or Proustian style—long, elegant, precise. By contrast—though I had never realized it before—my natural sentence is staccato and punctuated. Thankfully, Rosemary Waldrop was an incredible aid for *Island of the Dead*, as she was for OXO. She read over various drafts of each and made lots of very specific suggestions, and above all she kept me from stopping too soon; she'd subtly make me aware that it could be pushed farther. I find translations are almost always communal efforts—much more so than writing. Everyone who translates is always asking for opinions, trading problems, eliciting suggestions. I've been involved in a couple of different types of group translations, which are fascinating as they begin in the assumption that translation is naturally communal and go from there.

In addition to your M.A. in creative writing at San Francisco State, you earned a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature—what did the latter degree offer you as a writer?

It gave me a chance to keep reading deeply, and it also gave me a chance to focus on French work. I chose UC Santa Cruz in part because the program there was very strong on theory, and though I had been reading various theorists, such as Bachelard and Barthes and Deleuze, I knew I wasn't getting nearly as much out of them as I would if I were reading and discussing them with others.

How do you think poetry and theory relate?

I think of poetry as a variety of theory, but one that tries to minimize the necessary mediation between word and world—one that tries to be immediate. But the goal is the same: to try to articulate—and therefore make more intricate—something of what it is to be alive.

Your poems respond to visual art and opera—are there art forms you find less conducive to writing?

No, I don't think so, in that, if writing on art (or ekphrasis) is a way of looking at art, the degree to which it's conducive lies in the looking and in the viewer, not in the artwork itself. I'm interested too in slightly changing the terms of ekphrasis, which is considered writing that looks at art—I'd rather consider a writing that makes what it looks at into art by the way it looks at it. A lot has been written on the constitutive gaze, and I think that plays a role here.

There's also simply the issue of conventional categories—what do we in Western culture consider art? The project on gardens is interesting in this way—I consider it an ekphrastic project. For most people, considering a garden a work of art requires no stretch at all, but where does a garden

end? I consider everything that you can see from a garden to be part of the garden itself, which would then make everything you can see also part of the work of art. The project also incorporates a lot of history—which makes history itself into part of the artwork as well. Obviously, this goes on and on. One of ekphrasis' social functions is to transform more and more of the world into art. It's a vigorous machine—the world goes in one end and art comes out the other. And by extension, one of the functions of poetry is to change the way things are seen, whether they're works of art or philosophical concepts or social problems.

Do you think that's simply a function of poetry, or do you think that's also poetry's responsibility?

I don't think that poetry has any particular responsibilities—people have responsibilities. Last week I took part in a panel on poetry and politics at a small Midwestern college. During the panel, a couple of students said, "I don't want to write political poetry. And I really don't like hearing that I should." And I thought, "That makes perfect sense—write your Congressperson, write letters to editors of newspapers, and then write whatever you want in your poetry." On the other hand, we need to be constantly mindful of what poetry can do socially, politically, ethically—and after the poem is done, one might want to revise it in light of poetry's capabilities. It's dangerous to lead with a notion of function, but to reflect with a notion of function can be very useful.

There are American poets and critics who believe in the former, not the latter. I often find the poems that fit into that kind of thinking limited—I can see where they're going and how they're going to go there.

A first-world audience prefers to be surprised. Perhaps that's because we can conceive of boredom, whereas in much of the world, that would be a luxury. Poetry has a great political effect in many countries precisely

when and because it is predictable. It's the fact that it makes a promise, and says it will go out in the world and fulfill that promise, that gives it power. And the fact that its form makes a miniature but parallel promise (it indicates that it will end a certain way, and then it does) allows the poem to function as symbolic assurance that the other, the political, promises will be fulfilled as well.

How did you start writing serial poems?

On the one hand, it's one of the ways contemporary French poetry has directly influenced my work. Some French writers I've read a lot write poems that go over several pages, and sometimes with only a few lines per page. I was instantly attracted to that sense of ongoingness; it emphasizes the page as a visual object and as a unit of time. For years, I considered an eight to thirty line poem to be my basic unit of writing, but at a certain point that changed, and the book became my basic unit. It's an arbitrary form and largely determined by market conditions—it just happens that poetry is currently sold in our culture in objects roughly 6 x 9 inches and 48-100 pages. I know that if I was in a different culture, I'd be writing books of different sizes and lengths, and my poetry would fundamentally change. And on the other hand, I've been influenced by serial paintings. I would love to be able to do what serial paintings can do—repeat endlessly with always a shift, a gradual distancing of themselves from themselves. It's a commentary on the nature of an object and its necessary connection to thought, and that connection is revealed by seriality to be time itself.

Numbers seem very important in your poetry, both as content and in determining overall structures. Do you think there's something magic in numbers?

Magic is an interesting concept, and in a way I'd say yes. A number, in itself, is 100% potential. 1 for instance is entirely different from 1 apple. As soon as it has become 1 apple, it has gone from potential to actual; its

potential has been spent. The charge that surrounds numbers is powerful and delightful. I have a friend who puts numbers in his poems, just free-floating. No one knows what to do with them, but at the same time, no one can just read over them. Numbers make us aware of a signifying system that amounts to an utterly different language. And it's an entirely performative language; numbers perform entirely and only themselves. Unlike words, numbers are inseparable signs; they fit themselves, and do not exceed themselves as words always do.

Numbers are also always about relationship, about proportion. Every time numbers get involved, there's a focus on the underlying structure of matter. People who understand how the universe is put together, to the degree that that is possible, understand it through numbers. They have a way of seeing the world that I don't have—I can only get a glimpse, but it's numbers and their unsoundability that give me that glimpse.

God and religion also come up in your work. I would like to talk about both: religion as a historical theme, and the way your poems address a spiritual presence.

It's funny—to me every religion is an art movement. At the same time, you don't get fascinated by something without having some connection to the content. *Such Rich Hour* addresses the role of Christianity in the 15th century, and particularly the notion of saints. That book is trying to understand the various social forces at play in the 15th century—the social role of organized religion today is extremely different from what it was then. It's become a dangerous force, and the last thing I want to do is align myself with it in any way. And yet, I'm a very faithful person; I have that sort of ambient, general faith that doesn't demand it be specified. As does anybody, I ask myself from time to time, Mmm, what's going to happen next? And what happens out there? I feel that something does.

That God exists out in the world.

That gets us into the tangle of trying to define the word God, and I think we've inherited too many images and concepts to be able to leap into that tangle freely. I'm content to keep my attention here on earth, and leave the rest until I die. And if, when I die, I don't get the complete explanation of exactly how it all works, I'm going to be very disappointed! All that patience.

THE GARDEN AS A WORD GAME

There developed a whole vocabulary
to describe the ways

no small part of any traveler
green covered and water

its own ceiling, spoken, always building:
came to be

and gate beyond
parquet d'eau

the *tapis verte*
parement and *vertugadin* and then another gate
flagrant and beyond

which
with the exception of statues
which have no way of ending

in a stairway of
Touch here

became a celebrated shadow:

drape of water
cousin of lawn. And we'll build you
while crossing

a falling trellis
and we'll build you an alphabet
the leaves will orbit.

ARPENT

A precise measure, a length into which the earth,
stumbling, fell into the hands of

Arpentage: surveying; an earth now made of inches, the difference
between land and landscape.

Arpenter: to measure by striding, to stride along; to travel
the length and breadth of

to pace

up and down, to

take in (to look around a bit)

Arpenteur: he who measures land, who paces it out, who matches
a garden to a series of numbers, to him
come the correspondences. The equivalent
of that which while walking
you'd say

the lost body

for an instant descends until it is.

Walking is not something that can be controlled. And may
therefore open new doors into civil disobedience.

from TRILCE

James Wagner

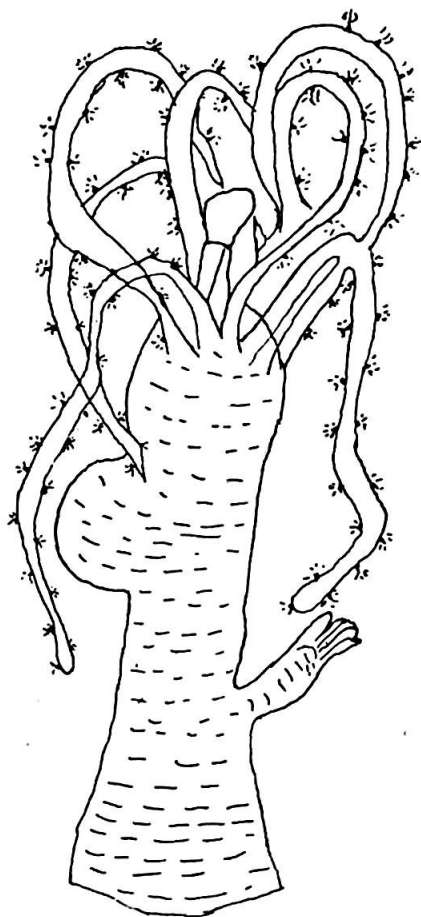
LXXI

Surplus suns and too many faces,
you see they are making telling sewing two curiosities.

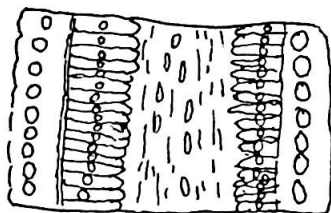
Call late. Naughty sobbing questions others enmity,
today's eternal. Call late. No whispers. Nightly
saving my merry succulence the universal:
leg I only obscurely doted, amazing the lore of.

'Vance loss carries flagellations for the tardy,
you enter hellos loss my eyes, carry others, at last rounding
fatherless they dust ideas.
Two men you miss men reciprocating settings
police and gardenias, practicing depressions,
you sense you cost a door.

Calling tamping, crept obscure futures,
you recording a rare and loin timing, the first cellar
the gallons adjust sober and mental,
sober and mental in navigating
the cupolas, the wide mitotic serious release.
Recognize, her fanning, baby to cope day go
dusty the lap you'll perish the one horse actually quivering.



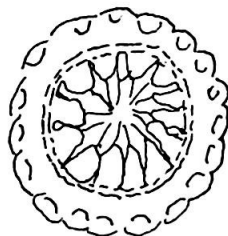
POLYP.



LONGITUDINAL SECTION.



Tentacle.



CROSS SECTION.

LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT MY DANCEFLOOR EXPERIENCE

Dan Hoy

My friend was speaking to me in a robot voice
and it was freaking me out:

"I've got everything I need. On the screen
is a picture of you and the reflection of my face
not exactly grinning, but something."

I misheard grinning as greening and therefore thought
he meant he was coming alive.

Only later when he said "No, *grinning*, dummy" did I realize
that was what he meant whether he meant to or not.

Either way I disagreed. I said "Watch this,"

and all he could do was the robot,

over and over,

but that seemed to be working out for him. People were responding,
mimicking his moves.

It was stupid. "This is fucking stupid," I said,
jutting my arm mechanically ironically.

"Now you're getting it," he said. "The beat, you like the beat
and it likes you, I can tell."

On instinct I said "Sorry, God is my boyfriend."

I don't know what my problem was. He was totally genuine.

FOR THE BIRDS

It had looked like such a good idea
until we put away our flashlights and the sun came out.

"Maybe we should just work during the day
to avoid this kind of thing."

"But that ruins the whole point of a clandestine endeavor."

"Maybe sneaking around's for the birds."

I nodded

even though the birds were obviously in plain sight,
they were just out of reach.

But no doubt about it

the holes had to be filled. So we did our work in reverse, at night again
to avoid embarrassment.

Time was running out.

This was much later.

We were running with it
and the dogs were running with us
though we asked them not to.

ASTORIA

Justin Lacour

To all the neighbors you are an enemy star.

Only the war brides were happy with their stockings,
teachers taking coffee at the funeral parlor
and everyone leaving in the orange light.

"Not a beginning or ending, really but some solid,
finished thing falling out of the sky, always needing
to be rescued, secret bullets smoking in our hands."

Once, there was a psychedelic prescience over my shoulder,
gave us the flash inside these speeding days,
now just dirty halos line the trees.

In this light, I can read the *pensees* written on your arm.
We were a couple then, you & I.



All through the siege, you were in sympathy
with the pilots, bending limbs to cushion their fall,
though no one lifts their arms to help you.

I traveled through ice and tunnels to find you.

Under the bridge, eyes are damp and no one goes easy
on the theremin.
Long fingers paint a globe on your tongue stud.

Rude boys ate codeine right from your hand.
I wash the night's graffiti from your glasses.
We keep a good shoe between us,
and live off the rain in your sweater.



If I was more like my counterpart in Norse
mythology, I'd carry you from this crater.



"The Nest of Hours is the full galaxy not
hamstrung by social flux.

We should travel there. The mushroom is
a good model for young people to follow."

Yes. Crossing the street, your anecdotes
of spooners in the treehouse are like the fruit
of a larger network of roots
I want to climb down, further and further.
"Roots have their own impulses against the true story
twisting to guide or twisting to strangle
the casual observer trying to find their source.
The quest is forgotten till the next story."



We never learned the name of the girl.
Perhaps it was "Shillelagh."



Children of the excavation,
we lived off small favors.

Evil shapes on your rooftop,
I left weapons in the pipes for you—
—rocks, slingshot, radiator cover.

A child is led blindly to seasonal phenomenon.
believing geese wired to the earth drag
October only into darkness.

But a handful of white pills adds a radiance
to you and your scotch egg.

When you were young, you took
your sleeping bag to the pet cemetery.

A boy came down from the lindens
and gently cut your eyebrows.

One day, he begins to give them back,
piece by piece.

This is how you remember.



Some say you can read the ambitions of the streets
from the color of the tears,
"But to lose face in the Tenderloin, is to gain street cred
at the hospital, and so the ice-breakers turn grim on the wide avenue."

My patron saint is apoplectic and rising.
On the feast day, school children draw pictures
of the rack in crayon to be hung at the tavern.
The tavern was roofless, but temperate to us.
Regulars spent long winters rigging their beer steins
with tiny carillons.

Many sunrises, the valley filled with these bells
and their pounding.



Meanwhile, everything's hunky-dory
up here on the mesa.

We shared a Murphy bed, many sandwiches.

Thank you for all the bricks you've thrown
at my person, it's a compliment

great as "Menial is your forte," or "I like
what you've done with the drunk tank."

From such humble beginnings, swinging
marionettes on the steps of the basilica.

I was a good son.

"The Kingdom" was a trailer park,
sentimental for Long Island Ice Teas
and buffalo races.

We woke to the sulfur of dive bars,
by now the notorious ones are impenetrable
guarded by periscopes hidden in rain barrels.



And tonight, daddy's insurance oil leaves the ol' block
a cinder.

We're scattered beyond the hedge rows.

The people there were rounders, happy
to be an enigma, without seeming conspiratorial.
Easily bored with more tranquil forms of gambling.

Mob rule. Our excitement over photographs,
when we all held the same silver certainty.

But the pin-up is wrong, we're both smaller
and ride two to a soapbox to where the barcarolles
become fuzzy.

May yours always be the golden voice of the southwest.

I'm so sorry I stole your medication.



It was a time when children were unafraid to smash
against the balsa of the theater.

The street smart practiced their shots on effigies
of cabbage and twigs.

A true baby would pay the hooligan tax for two.

In such idylls, safety pins could bind the hopes
of an entire grade level.

I just kept sniffing from my paper sack.

A neighborhood called the Devil's Elbow,
we perched on a billboard for the sea.

You know which painted eye opens to a room
of once-rattled bones.

Erotic decals on your helmet.
We're both clumsy playing the dozens.

Both sent to school in metal shoes,
both reformed from starting fires.



"Comics were larger then,
and arrived several times a day.

The sun passed through gimlets
to light the interior of each panel."



"But what was 'flying' is now 'blown away.'
we can see that from here.

We do not speak of the ones autumn lifted,
or their red parasols in the wet grass."



If late summer, then thistles behind the drugstore.
If late summer, then the insect jar glows around
your neck.

There are other better places to invade.
I was guided by the fire on your drinks.

Quick, while the eyes are out and bleeding,
you can warm your hands on my side.

They're everywhere now, adventures.

Take one for your budding skyline.
what stays rootless can float over houses of power.

I was always taken with you.
Blue eyes. Your sang froid in the oubliette.

I'll carry your old teeth in my pocket

If the paper trail tethers me to one fragile address,
let it be the egg where you find me.

[THIS IS WHAT'S BEEN DONE TO FLESH]

Joshua Beckman

This is what's been done to flesh
the quill and the book and the
indiscretion of stone upon which
a little drop of gold does fall,
the cry of a pigeon or moan
of the folded over father, and
beneath these draped mysteries
the wine does spill upon the dog
the dog does sit in the corner
curing itself of this indifference
and the bar of light does illumine
such dust as has been brought
into upheaval with only your
untidy waking—the covers under
your chin:

pull

and in the distant river
they are listening, cut grass
blown through the window and
why music and the absorbency
of such concrete as has distilled
the discordance of the neighborhood
and has left "through the music
he sweetly displays" an empty field

of lost balloons rolling into streets
as have, in other times, volcanoes
covered such singers as do justice
to the cosmic tops they had seen through
their equally majestic windows, the mint
leaf touched the lip, the regular
resurrection of those empty spaces
that result from banishment,
the ladder leaned against a tree,
Dear Margaret, I, in such
constant envious refrain as does inform
most open speech, do extend and my
flower does tap your halo—how it spins
now surrounded by such bagèd peoples
as only Florida can offer. I have set
your aura a runnin and from it (its sun)
I gather light. This, you see,
is our domestic partnership—the
conclusion of each well-attached earring
and fragrant misunderstanding, the chorus
of the barbaric calling, while here in the meeting
I'm passed this note:

Dismal are we who love only recognition
Now hand me the saber.

Which I did.

1:00 pm	Behind curtain baby kissing mother
1:05 pm	Clouds cover mountains
1:10 pm	Ribbons in patterns descending
1:20 pm	Tragic event of saber and table

The flesh. In time you will learn to look
 at everything. In time you will learn to
 touch everything. In time you will learn
 to clothe everything. In time you will
 learn to eat everything. In time you will
 learn to say of everything that it has
 been seen, that it has been touched, that
 it has been killed, that it has been eaten.
 Bloodied are our hours, in reflection,
 the knuckle and the finger and the paper.
 The shoulder. At dusk I did slip from the town,
 the baby under my wing. Now to the water,
 where what I have done will be reflected on later.

FROM THEIR FAMILY LETTERS

Jennifer Banks

Dear Mother,

During the Second World War, I was born
onto a streetcar.

Europe was tiny. I wore my hair cut short
and fell in love with my brigade.

We moved to the north where I repeatedly had visions
of grandfather choking.

The famine mesmerized, I sketched
the skeletons.

August.

And I've taken well to prison—have to remind myself why
I'm footless.

FIVE TEXTS

Jean-Pierre Brisset

AU COMMENCEMENT . . .

QUOI?
POURQUOI?

elle
sans elle
fait sans elle
é fait sans elle
é-té fait sans elle
n'a é-té fait sans elle
fait n'a é-té fait sans elle
é fait n'a é-té fait sans elle
é-té fait n'a é-té fait sans elle
a é-té fait n'a é-té fait sans elle
qui a é-té fait n'a é-té fait sans elle
ce qui a é-té fait n'a é-té fait sans elle
de ce qui a é-té fait n'a é-té fait sans elle
rien de ce qui a é-té fait n'a é-té fait sans elle

Toutes choses ont é-té faites par elle, et rien de ce qui a é-té fait n'a é-té fait sans elle.

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

WHAT?

WHY?

.

..

... (etc.)

By it were all things made and without it was not anything made.

... ÉTAIT LA PAROLE

Sopranos:

Haut, ce haut, haute heure, ce haut hauteur, haut, sauteur, à ce haut,
assaut, sur le saut-
le, on sautait sur le sol, haut, au sol, au sol eille haut, au sol eille ici,
au soleil haut ici,
soleil ici, socilliété, aussi elle, au ciel, haut c'ist eux, aussi eux,
les voilà haut eaux
c'ist eux, aussi eux, eaux ciel, les voilà aux cieux, haut aux cieux, société.

Altos:

Aux, aux berges! auberge! à rive, arrive, à la rivire, à la rive y ai aire,
a béant donné,
abandonné on chéant j'ai, on changeait, peux l'ai in chéant, plainchant,
au séant, in eau
séant, innocents, ai séant ce, ai sens ce, essence, le séant queue t'ai eu
aire, le
sanctuaire, société.

Tenors:

O! Océan, par eau mène-le, promène-le, se par eau mènér, se promener,
par eau jette,
projetter, per eau c'est, procès, per eau cession, procession, per eau créé,
procréé, per
eau grès, progrès, per eau venu, provenu, par eau vient, provient,
par eau noncé,
prononcé, O! société.

... WAS THE WORD

Sopranos:

High, this high, high time, this high height, high, leaper, to this high, jump, on this jump, jump on the ground, high, on the ground, on the ground get high, on the ground get here, to this here high sun, here sun, all abouts, it too, in the sky, they's high, them too, see them's high waters are they, them too, watery skies, see them in the skies, society.

Altos:

To, to the banks! resting-place! to bank, arrive, in the river, on the bank there's an area, given to gaping, abandoned one checks oneself, one changes, little have I changed, plainchant, in the seething, in seething water, innocent, have this seething, have this sense, essence, the seething tail that you have has its place, the sanctuary, society.

Tenors:

O! Ocean, lead it through water, walk it, lead oneself through water, walk, throw through water, project, it's through water, process, through water halting, procession, created through water, procreated, through water sandstone, progress, come through water, result from, came through water, resulted from, enunciated through water, pronounced, O! Society.

Basses:

Eau ai, eau ai, l'eau j'ai, logé, je suis logé, dans mon l'eau je mange,
dans mon l'eau je
mans, dans mon logement, eau, eau céans, au séant, O! l'eau séant,
eau-ce ai en, ce
eau-ce, sauce, sauce y était, sauce il y était, au con mets en ce
mets en, au
commencement, société.

Basses:

Water have, water have, the water have I, lodged, I am lodged, in my water I eat, in my water I eat, in my dwelling-place, water, swelling water, seething, O! the seething water, in this water have, this water here, sauce, sauce was, there was sauce, along with this put in, in the beginning, society.

LES ANCÊTRES

la gu'euraine ouille
coaqué, coèque, quéquête, que re r'ai haut, cara, cate, couique
(ololo, brekekex)
core, corps, en core, en corps, encore
r'ai ain, rain/ r'ai aine, reine
pare-rain, mare-rain
sue z'ai rein, suzerain
cou rond, couronne
cou-de-pied, coude pied, coup de pied
le pouce pousser, pous-ce
c'est che veux, c'est ce que je veux
j'ai barbe ôté, j'ai barbotté
a peau aie-le, à poil
laine ai, l'aóné, l'est né
Aine, diz aines, die Zaehne
des sans dents (sont) descendants

THE ANCESTORS

the water-pisser
coexist, accede again, come and look, reunite, cara, cate,
 (ololo, brekekex)
core, body, in the core, in the body, yet again
has flow, rain/ has groin, queen
guard-frog, pond-frog
ruling over you, sovereign
round neck, crown
ankle, elbow of the foot, kick
the thumb pushes out, push-it
it's that wish, it's what I want
I wore a beard, I paddled
I had it on my skin, hairy
wool had, the older one, the been-born
One, ten ones, die Zæhne (teeth)
those without teeth (are) descendants

LA NOURRITURE

La plus ancienne nourriture est celle de nos grenouilles. Mais,
quand les ancetres
devinrent plus grands, ils se mirent à se manger entre eux.
Les gros mangeait les petits, les gens bons les jambons, le porc n'a pas
de jambes, le
cuisseau, le cuissot, le cuisse-haut, le cuisse os, le gigot, le gigot,
le gigue haut, le gigos.
La bouche. Le mot beau désigna la bouche. Dans le ton beau,
dans le tombeau.
Les premiers qui furent mis dans le tombeau, le furent dans la bouche
des ancetres, mords, mors, mort.
Il a pris le mors, le mort aux dents, il a manger la grenouille, manger,
macher, mastiquer
mange-le, male, le male, Adam, Adam au repos, homme, uomo, homo,
au mot!
EH! VA! EVA!
Ah! j'ai faim, femme, famé, fais moi . . .

FOOD

The most ancient food was that of our frog ancestors. But, as they
developed, they
descended to eating one another.

The big ones ate the little ones, good ones ate hams, pork's got no legs,
thigh, high
thigh, thigh bone, haunch, leg, jig.

Mouth. The word beau meant mouth, in a beautiful tone, in the tomb.

The first to be
placed in the tomb were placed in the mouths of our ancestors, bitten,
slain, dead.

He took a bite, a bite with his teeth, he ate the frog, ate, chewed,
masticated

Eat him, male, the male, Adam, Adam at rest, man! uomo! homo! to
the word!

EH! GO! EVE!

Ah! I'm hungry, woman, infamous, make me . . .

LA GRANDE LOI

Les dents, la bouche
les dents la bouchent
l'aidant la bouche
l'aide en la bouche
laides en la bouche
laid dans la bouche
lait dans la bouche
l'est dam le à bouche
les dents-là bouche!

THE GREAT LAW

the teeth, the mouth
the teeth block it (i.e. the entrance to the mouth)
with the help of the mouth
the help in the mouth
ugly in the mouth (i.e. the teeth)
ugliness in the mouth
milk in the mouth (i.e. the teeth's whiteness)
there is damage in the mouth (i.e. decay and aching)
shut your teeth!

Edited and translated from the French by Andrew Hugill.

from LA SCIENCE DE DIEU

Jean-Pierre Brisset

FIRST EXERCISES AND MEANS OF EXISTENCE

[. . .] All languages preserve the memory of the period during which we lived on flies.

[. . .] We still see our first ancestor living in the bogs and marshes; he comes up onto the ground, climbs into the sun. He is a hopper who lives on grasshoppers, on crickets, on anything that buzzes and especially flies. This ancestor, we have already called him by his name: he is the frog.

THE FROG

Everyone knows that frogs don't have discernible sexual organs; they reproduce by spawning. Nevertheless, the male and female seek each other out fervently and clasp themselves together with such force that one can *size up* their *size* without having to separate them. The skin of the frog is naturally white. The sun colours it differently on the back and sides, but the underbelly remains white. When doctors graft this skin onto human flesh, it is easily accepted. The frog, serpent of old, changes his skin like the snake, and thus becomes completely white for a certain time. 'He changed his skin but remained the same beast,' as they used to say of him; and also, 'shed one's skin,' 'change one's skin.' This little hopper is entirely without hair.

The frog's neck is set into the shoulders so that he is incapable of turning his head. His eyes are found towards the back of the head, and his

mouth extends up to the ears. The arms are short, so that to this day we appreciate the one with long arms. The frog has ten toes, whereas each hand has only four digits; the thumb is missing. The foot is not connected by any joint, but is rather an extension of the leg, and the heel is flexible. Lastly, the frog has no teeth.

Thus the frog has no sex, no thumb, no neck, neither hair nor teeth. The feet culminate in a double fish-tail, like the Tritons and Sirens of the Fable.

The advent of the sex in this ancestor was the innovation that modified the frog's cry and gave it a perfect precision. It was at this moment that words as we know them were conceived, and they have never changed since.

It is impossible to analyse words created by sexual impetus without perturbing public modesty. Furthermore, this would take years and multiple volumes. We will, however, analyse the word 'sex' in this book, which is in fact a very pure word, incapable of offending the ear or the sensibility of anyone, a word created by angels, the first creatures of the Eternal God.

THE FORMATION OF THE SEX

Let us first remark that it is possible to change the place of the words in a sentence without modifying the idea expressed: *la porte est ouverte* [the door is open] and *porte est ouverte là* [door is open there] still say *ouverte est la porte* [open is the door]. The same principle held for: *à le* [to the (masc.)] which was equivalent to *le à* [the (masc.) to] = *là* [there] and *ale* [ale] also being equatable with *là* [there].

When we accept this, we read: *ai que ce?* [(I) have that this?] with the value of: *ce qu'ai?* [that that (I) have?] or *qu'ai ce?* = *qu'ai-je?* [that (I) have this?]

= that have I?]. This was said on *ce quai* [this dock] which the ancestor occupied. The questions: *ai que ce?* [(I) have that this?], *est que ce?* [is that this?] were expressed *ai* [(I) have] or *est quoi ici?* [is what here?] and created the name of *sexe* [sex]. Some would pronounce it: *éqce*; others: *èqce*, according to the generative sentence: *ai que ce? est que ce?* [have (I) that this? is it that this?]. Whence the word *sex* is pronounced either *séqce* or *sèqce*. *Ec, éque* or *ek*, formed from: *ai que?* [have (I) that?] is even a first name for *sex*: *éque-ce* [(?) -this] equatable with *ce éque*, *ec* or *ek* [this (?)] and became *exe* [ex].

The question was then asked: *ce exe, sais que ce?* [this ex, do (you/I) know what this?] = this point, do you know what it is? which became: *sex*. — *Sais que c'est?* [do (you/I) know what it is?], *ce exe est* [this ex is], *sexe est* [sex is], *ce excès* [this excess], it's (the) *sex*. — We see that the *sex* was the first excess. There is no excess to fear among those who have no *sex*. In: *ce exe est* [this ex is], we can analyse: 'this' or 'this here' is an 'ex'; and: 'ex is this' or 'this here.' Continuing, we see that 'this' shows and designates first of all the *sex*. Also, *ce ek-ce* [this (?)] = this *sex* here: *sex*. *Eh, è, é*, is also a first name for the *sex*: *Ce que c'est? Sexe est* [what it is? It's *sex*].

Je ne sais que c'est. Jeune sexe est. [I don't know what it is, young *sex* is.] The first thing that the ancestor noticed and that he did not recognize was a young *sex*, a *sex* in formation. In this case the most clairvoyant people are still sometimes forced to say: *Je ne sais que c'est* [I don't know what it is]. *Jeune sexe est* [young *sex* is] equals: *sexe est jeune* [sex is young] and *jeune est sexe* [sex is young (sounds like 'I have no sex')]. The word 'young' can be considered a noun. As a result, 'young' designates and will designate those who took a *sex*. The young are children whose member has not yet attained all of its power, for it always develops very slowly.

Tu sais que c'est bien. Tu sexe est bien. [You know that it is good, you *sex* is good.] The word *tu* [you], like young, also indicates the *sex*. It is a childish

term: hide your *tu*, your *tutu*. *Tu tu* = your sex. '*Tu relues tu tu*' ['you're eying your sex']. '*Turlututu*' ['no way'], repeated with vexation the one who was the object of this hurtful remark.

Y ce ai que c'est? Il sait que c'est. Y sais que c'est. Y sexe est. [It this (I) have that is it? he knows that it is, it (you/I) know that it is, it sex is.] *Y* referred first of all to the sex, then meant 'I' and finally 'he.' *Y le sexe est. Il sait que c'est.* [It the sex is, he knows what it is.]

On sait que c'est. On sexe est. [One knows what it is, one sex is.] The pronoun *one* designated the sex and had the significance of *en, en ce lieu, en ce l'yeu* [in, in this place, in this the eye], in that eye there. The sex presented itself in the form *d'yeu* [of eye ~ sounds like 'God'] or of eyes. It was a slight opening. The pronoun 'one' is indefinite and all words that it can replace referred to the sex, the origin of all living speech: Pierre, Jean, Julie, etc. *sait que c'est bien* [knows that it's good] and *sexe est bien* [sex is good]. Everything that can know something is necessarily in its origin a sex, a member of the human or divine family.

Je sais que c'est bien. Je ou jeu sexe est bien. [I know that it's good, I or game sex is good.] The first game was sex. The passion of the game arises from this. The prudent individual hid his game. The pronoun 'I' thus designates the sex, and when the 'I' speaks, it's a sex, a virile member of the Eternal-God that acts by will or by permission. It was in speaking of his sex that the ancestor noticed that he was speaking about his own person, about himself.

A = ai. Que ce a? = qu'ai-je? —Que ça ou çà? = Quoi cela? Que exe est que ce a? = Quel sexe est que j'ai? Que excès que a! Qu'est-ce? que sexe a. Que sexe a? Qu'ai? que sexe a? [I have, what this (he) has? = what do I have? —that that or here? = what that? what exe is that this has? what sex is that I have? what excess that (he) has! What is it? that (he) has sex, that (he)

has sex? what do (I) have? what sex does (he) have?] Kékséksa? *Que aie ce que c'est que ce a?* [that (I/you) might have what it is that this has?] = Here see or take that which I have. Its unfamiliarity changed the command into a question: *Qu'est-ce que c'est que ca?* [what is that?] These analyses by themselves will suffice to show, by the Infallible Law that guides us in our work, that our most familiar question is born with these beings who take the sex and who know nothing of this ex-crescence, this ex-tension. Today, one can at most be embarrassed for the gender.

Je me exe à mine ai. Tu te exe à mine as. Y ce exe à mine a. Y sexe à mine a. Y le sexe a mine à. [I have ex with mine/mien, you have exe with mine/mien, it has this exe with mine/mien, it the sexe has mine/mien with.] It is the sex à la mine [with the mine/mien] or à la main [in the hand] which the ancestor *s'examinait* [(s)examined], *sexe à mine ai* [sex of mine/mien have (I)], *Mine* [mine/mien] signified *main* [hand]. The hand made a face and mined the ground. *Che mine* [(?) mine], *chemine* [(he) walks]; *che main* [(?) hand], *chemin* [path], also said: *ici la main* [here is the hand]. Thus the creator of '*je m'examinaï*' [I examined myself], etc. was saying: *J'ai mon sexe à la main* [I have my sex in my hand], etc. It was in examining his sex that the ancestor used to make *son examen* [his examination], *son exe à main* [his ex in hand], *son nexé à main* [his nexé in hand]. The examination of the sex is the first that one undergoes upon coming into the world.

In *examiner*, *examen*, etc., 'ex' is pronounced: *égze*. This change demonstrates to us that: *gue* = *que* [that], *ze* = *ce* [this]. The inversion of *égze* gives *ze gu'ai* = *ce qu'a* [(?) = that which (he) has]. *Gu'ai* = *j'ai* [(?) = I have] and formed *gai*, *gué*, *guet* [gay, ford, watch]. The sex made one 'gay'; the aquatic ancestor used to make his calls on the 'ford' where they were 'standing watch.' It is on this ford that the knights of the watch used to engage in combat. Each family of ancestors defended his ford and his marsh. — Since *ze* = *ce*, to understand perfectly words with the sound 'ze,' we have to reinstate its old value of 'ce.' He is always à *zézayer* [lipping],

meant: *à s'essayer* [trying his hand (at something)]. He who tried, lisped. *A sesse eille ai, à zéze eille ai* [(?), (?)] = by the sex (I/you) see what I have. *Sesse* and *zéze* thus indicated the sex. Italian: *il sesse ho* = I have the sex; *il sesso* = the sex. *Ce esse: ce exe: sesse: sexe*. [This hook or linchpin, this ex, (?), sex]

Ce meant the sex: *ce ai, ai ce, esse* [this (I) have, (I) have this, ?]. We noted that *on* [one] was equivalent to *en* [in], in this place. *On ce ai c'est* [one this (I) have it is] = this in that I have. *On ce esse est, on ce esse aie. On sesse est, on sesse aie. On sait c'est. On ce essaie, on s'essaie*. [One this hook is, one this hook might have, one is (?), one might have (?)]. *On ce essaie* [one this tries] clearly shows 'ce' presenting the sex and uniting with the one who is speaking in the phrase: *on s'essaie* [one tries]. Similarly, *l'on ce sexe à mine a, l'on s'examina* [one has this sex with mine/mien, one examined oneself]. The German pronoun *Sich* = one and is formed from: *ce ich* = this me and points to the sex as does *soi* [the self or oneself]. *Ce ois* [this (?)] = look at this, the *ce* [this] or *sexe* [sex]. 'Self' is thus the equivalent of 'sex.' The first ancestor spoke of nothing else. It is still the basis of conversation for demons.

Thus the pronouns trace their origin back to the ancestor's reflection on his own nudity. All that is figurative speech today was in the beginning applied to material acts. It was necessary that the word be formed before the mind carried it into the realm of pure thought.

Qu'ist ce exe que l'eus? Qu'ist sexe que l'eus or l'ai? [What (?) this exe that (he) had it? what (?) sex that (I) had or have?] In primitive times, the past tenses of verbs were present tenses. 'I had it' was equivalent to 'I have it' and formed the definite past of the verb *lire* [to read]: *Je lus; tu l'eus, tu lus; il l'eut, il lut; nous l'eûmes, nous lûmes; vous l'eûtes, vous lûtes; ils lurent*. [I read; you had it, you read; he had it, he read; we had it, we read; you had it, you read; they had it.] The first ones who 'had it' [*l'eurent*] were

'with it' [*lurons*], and the first thing that they read [*lurent*] was sex. The sex was also the first lyre, it produced ire. It is there that it became necessary first to read [*lire*] in a state of delirium. The sex was thus the first cause of attraction and of repulsion. The question: *Qu'ist sexe que l'eus?* [what (?) sex that (I/you) had or have?] caused the ancestors to repulse one another, and they said: There they are, those ones who (s)exclude themselves. *Y sais que, ce que l'eus, est* [it knows that, that which (I/you) had, is] = I know that what I have is. *Y sexe que l'eus est* [it sex it is that (I/you) have] = it is there the sex that I have. Same sexes didn't go together, they (s)excluded each other.

The word 'sex' has drawn us far beyond our original intent. Each sound is an ancestor spirit who takes hold of the thinker and drives him from all sides among his relations, his parentage, and tells him of his birth and of his genealogy.

The key that we are supplying here permits the analysis of all spoken words, that is, of all languages. This took only a few pages. The science of speech is therefore not obscure, for a child can understand us. It is impossible to examine, to study this chapter and to reflect on it, or on its analyses, without the whole of one's soul being convinced that it is true: that the word 'sex' was formed at the same time as the thing itself. As a consequence, there must have been a time when the ancestor had no sex and yet was already endowed with a fairly well-developed language that has since passed down into contemporary speech during the long period of sexual formation.

That the ancestor might have spoken before the sex existed is a point so important that before continuing any further, we want to make certain that the conviction of this truth penetrates the mind of all attentive readers. There is, according to our Infallible Law, a patent correlation between the words *neuf*, *noeud*, and *ne* [new, knot, not]. This sound has

the same value as *n'ai* = *j'ai* [(I) don't have = I have]. *N'u* [(?)] meant in the mind of the first being: 'I have,' 'here,' 'take.' *Neux* [(?)] = take. Since this idea has formed the number 'nine' [*neuf*], the word 'new' [*neuf*], the word 'knot' [*noeud*] attached to the verb 'to knot', and the negation 'not' [*ne*], one must find the common origin for these.

The word 'knot' is noble in the knots of hymen, it has thus a mystic connection to marriage. It is a low, base, and popular term for the sex.

The verb *naître* [to be born] equals: *neuf* and *noeud être* [new/nine and knot to be]. In order to be born, one must *ne être* [not to be, not being] or *ne pas être* [not to be]. He who is, is born, cannot be born again, and can no longer not be. Birth took place by the acquisition of a new object, the knot.

Je noeud acquis, tu noeud acquis, il noeud acquit, nous noeud acquimes, vous noeud acquîtes, ils noeud acquirent [I acquired knot, you acquired knot, he acquired knot, we acquired knot, you (pl.) acquired knot, they acquired knot] have become the definite past of *naître* [to be born]: *Je naquis, tu naquis, il naquis, nous naquimes, vous naquîtes, il naquirent* [I was born, you were born, he was born, we were born, you (pl) were born, they were born].

Jeu neuf est [new game it is] = the game is new. *Joëu, noeud est* [(?), knot is]. *Jeune est, je nais, genêts* [young is, I am born, brambles]. Often births occurred at the time of brambles, the moment when they are in bloom. *Y noeud est* [it knot is], he is born. *Y noeud est-ce?* [it knot is it?], they are born.

Jeune être ai, jeune est trait, je naîtrai. [Young being is, young is trait, I will be born]. The sex was the first being, a young being, and this being presented himself in the form of a trait. As soon as the trait appeared,

it was known that one had to be born. The sex came out of this trait, it was an extract, ex-trait or pulled. *Tu neuf être as* [you new being have], you will be born.

Thus we hear our ancestors speak our own language, which they created unconsciously before being born. If our ancestors had not spoken before being born, before using for the first time, the verb to be born would have no simple tenses, for man cannot say of himself: I was born, I am born, or I will be born. That can only be said figuratively and it is an axiom of philosophy and an evangelical truth that what is spiritual or figurative was originally animal or material.

Every man said of himself: I am born. We are all born: but first there were beings who were not born, although they were living and endowed with speech. Those who were born were nobles, in virtue of the hind part, the noble parts. Today, man is the only noble, for only the man of good will, whom God has chosen, can furnish his true birth extract and tell of his origin long before the most ancient families, far earlier than kings, emperors, marine gods, and even before Uranus, the most ancient of gods.

In German, the verb 'to be born' is translated *geboren werden* = to become born. Our ancestors became born, *wurden geboren*: today, men are born, *sind geboren*.

Geboren = born and is related in German to *geborht* = pierced.

In French, to pierce and to be born were, in the beginning, the same act: to be born, one had to pierce.

The sex was formed at first, but it wasn't pierced. In order to pierce, it was necessary that the opening in the bladder, which in the frog is found

in the anus, be closed. Because of this the sex was inflamed, an abscess caused a fever until, piercing the sex, water escaped by its new path, and one was born.

With birth, language developed considerably, and we can say that almost all the numerous popular words date from this era.

The verb 'to be born' in all languages shares the following characteristic: simple tenses are only employed figuratively, they are no longer materially exact. The man was/is born [*l'homme est né*], the elder man [*l'homme aîné*], before the first day: he is the beginning of God's creation (Rev. 3.14).

The cry *neux* [(?)] or knot thus meant 'take' during the development of the knot. With time, this order became hideous, and elicited the refusal to obey which is expressed in the negation 'not.' Knot wants [*noeud veu*]. 'Not want!' [*ne veux!*] the nephews [*neveux*] or the weak used to say to the uncles, the strongest.

The sound 'not' or 'knot' is found as a negation in most languages, and in the word that expresses the name or noun. *Le noeuds ons* [the knot ones] = I have the knot, and take the knot. This order created the name that comes from the sex and caused the 'not' to be pronounced. Our ancestors only took a name once they were born. The child didn't receive a name until after his birth. The woman who says *ney* refuses the *name* of the man.

So it is that one sound, one word, gives birth to different minds, either in the same moment, or subsequently. What is attractive to one is repulsive to another. It happens sometimes that we reject with force and violence that which had once attracted us with the most charm and intensity.

The knot was thus the first new object, the first novelty: *noeud ouve* or *ouvre, eau t'ai* [knot (?) or (he) opens or works, water (I) have you ~ sounds like

nouveauté, novelty]. Thus the sex passing water is a novelty. How many millions of years preceded this novelty can be calculated by the age of the earth, since the frog appeared at the very beginning of its formation, in the age of granite.

There is a relation between the 'nine' and 'new,' which can be found in all languages:

English	nine	new
German	neun	neue
Swedish	nio	nia
Italian	nove	nuove
Spanish	nueve	nuevo
Greek	énnea	néos, néa, etc.

There is, therefore, a definite link and a common origin between the novelty which was the perfect formation of the sex, under the name of the knot, and the number nine. This phonetic affinity comes from the fact that at the same era the ninth tooth appeared in each jaw of the ancestor's mouth: for it is in the development of teeth that enumeration began [. . .].

Thus have we have clearly outlined the relationship and shared origin of the words: knot, not, nine and new, and simultaneously proven, with a stupefying abundance of materials, that speech existed before the development of the sex.

In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. All things emerged from it.

And now let us examine the language of our frog. [. . .]

CAVEAT LECTOR (TRANSLATORS' NOTE)

As Michel Foucault observes in his preface to a recent edition of *La Science de Dieu* and *La grammaire logique*, one of the fundamental principles of Brisset's composition is that of untranslatability. Brisset cautions in his introduction to *La Science de Dieu* that the text "cannot be entirely translated"; the warning is not an idle one. It is impossible to recreate in a translation the explosive force of Brisset's linguistic analyses, spiralling outward as they do from a single word into a phrase, a sentence, an episode, a myth of origins—into, eventually, a whole history and pre-history. Such a task is impossible, first of all because sound rather than sense—or sound at the moment where it is forced into collision with sense—is what guides the author's investigations into the birth of the French language, and thence, given the primordiality of the French tongue in Brisset's account, into the origins of all language. It is impossible, secondly, because the average translator, whether we praise his relative sanity or blame his prosaicism for the failure, cannot hope to match the sense of excess, of surplus, of the clamorous engendering of words and ideas and ideas from words, that one encounters in the original text. Brisset's treatise could be "entirely" rendered only by an equally nonconformist translator; and there is no assurance (we might cite here Antonin Artaud's translation of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" as case in point) that such a translation, although perhaps closer in spirit to the original, would have any more success in reaching the non-clinicable public.

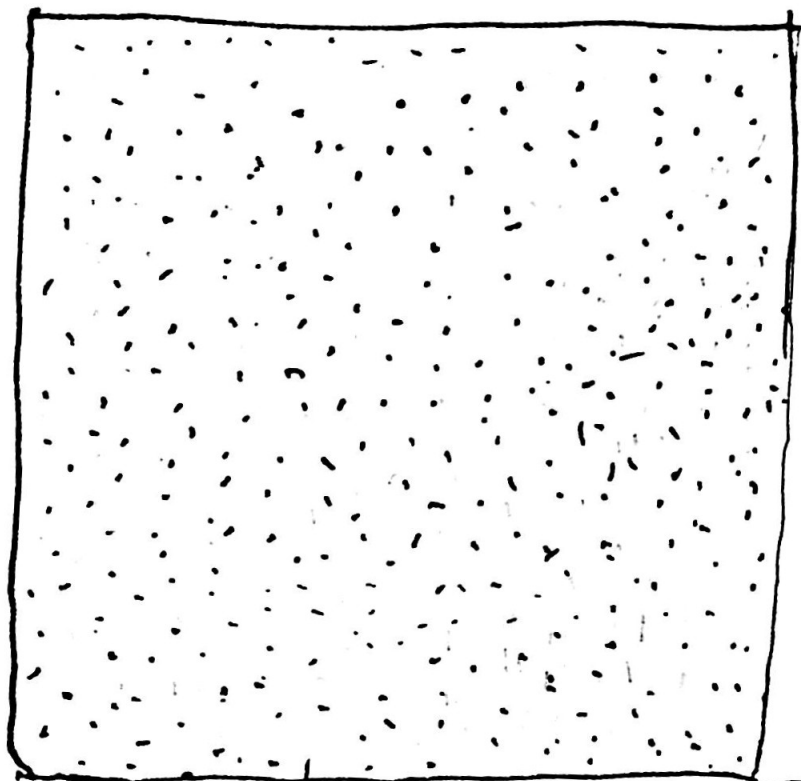
The above translation, as Brisset foresaw, does not do justice to the systematic chaos of the author's own text. It is important to keep in mind while reading the translation that most of *La Science de Dieu* depends upon, and is generated from, a homophony of French terms, and that this homophony cannot be recreated in English since it is obviously impossible to translate simultaneously both the sense and the sound of Brisset's original work.

Take, for instance, Brisset's delicate anatomisation of one of the treatise's seminal terms: *sexe*. From the three sounds that make up the

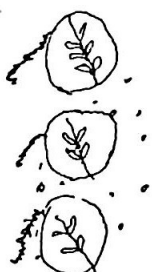
word's verbal signifier s-e-x, Brisset unearths an exchange which once lay hidden, atavistically, in the first stirrings of the French language: "Ce exe, sais que ce?" "Sexe." "Sais que c'est?" "Ce exe est." "Sexe est." "Ce excès, c'est le sexe." Phonetically, each of these phrases is a variation on the theme of the word 'sex,' a drawing out of the sound /sks/, much as a diva might prolong the word over several keys and octaves, or a scat singer might extend the sound over different beats and rhythms.

The difficulty in translating lies in the fact that if we submit the English word "sex" to a similar technique of extension and dissection, the word's constituent sounds will not follow the same semantic paths as in French. One way of proceeding would be to try to translate Brisset's method, rather than the sense of his text. One could, for example, produce anagrams for "sex"—or for "sexual," as this gives us a few more syllables with which to work—and, bypassing Brisset's own phonetic-semantic channels, trace a route along the various paths that open before us in English: "Sea lux" (obliquely recalling Brisset's thesis that the ancestor frog emerged from the water), "Lacks use" (the sex was an excess). But even if one were to select anagrams which remained as close as possible to Brisset's text, it is doubtful that the reader would garner a faithful image of the original through such a translation. Alternatively, one could explore concurrently several possibilities evoked by Brisset's text, mapping out the relations between sound and sense and the connections and contingencies to which these lead. But in this case, it is readability that would be sacrificed; and while Brisset's text may be complex, it remains a text rather than a diagram.

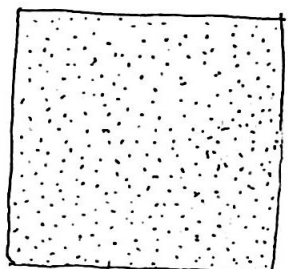
Stephanie Lysyk and Stéfan Sinclair



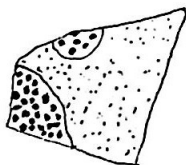
F R O G B L O O D .



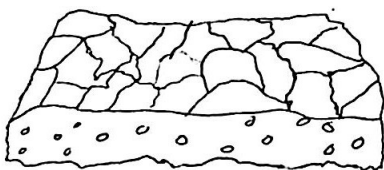
Small intestine
OF A FROG.



FROG BLOOD



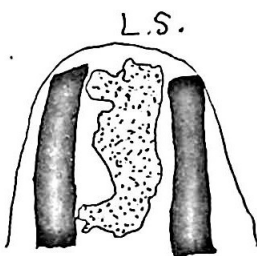
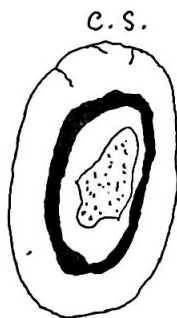
FROG SKIN.



HUMAN SKIN.



Snake SKIN.



Bone marrow.

CODA FOR FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA

Bill Lavender

*(A homophonic imitation of Federico García Lorca's
"Oda a Walt Whitman")*

From the Manzanares east to Retiro
men chant inside suits, sensing
the rush, acid curves and martinis.
November milk scours the plateau from rocks,
and kids debunk escalators & perspectives.

People: no one is dedicated,
no one carries the river,
no one ambles lost over granaries,
no one assembles the legends for the play.

From the Manzanares east to Ventas
men lunch on industry
seeing judges bring the faun, wringing
proposals of circumnavigation
& cellos disembark to points east of Texas,
places of business, emptied of elevation.

People: no one is detained,
no one inquires or nudges,
no one rumbles or reflects
that the crude armadillo still trembles.

Winds of lunatic salvation
rotate over tundra and silence
as death adjudicates memory
east of attitudes so level they're unafraid.

Madrid descends,
Madrid deactivates east of mirth.
As angels levitate, occult and labial,
as vision predicts neither dirt nor virtue,
as the suave terror of anemones mandates,

the knee of our soul moans. Feed her slowly, Federico García Lorca.
These decades of fear your borrowed lines dematerialize:
& we kneel to the humble and pained gestures of loons,
& we kneel to the muscles of a polio victim,
& we kneel to voices under columns of censors.
Ancient hermetic code of need,
key and jewel of the effort to feel,
coin of sex altered for a grudge,
enemy of satire,
enemy of vitality,
a man with long curls drops his burden of light.

& the knee of our soul moans, her vital measure
that in mountains of carbon announced the ferocious
son, a bastard but royal in demeanor, coming up the river
with aging comrades to ponder and to pick up
the political colors of an ignorant leopard.

& the knee of our soul moans, adept at salvage, mechanized,
its humor sold in markets. Feed her slowly, Federico García Lorca.
Story for the aztecs,
anxious hope laid bare,
silent and rational as elemental force,
temperate in those places of lost chauffeurs,
Garibaldi on the platforms of the ocean,
those miracles, Federico García Lorca, you personify.

Tambourine so easy! Tambourine! He's despondent,
toothed & bearded & luminous—he casts
rubies north into the arena,
without ado or grief he's adamant,
combing gates & combing serpents—
those miracles, Federico García Lorca, those miracles—
turbines and liquid, carnal parts fusing
into the boat of mortal delight doñas adore.

Tambourine so easy! Tambourine! Did we tender
a punctual and soothing delusion,
a qualified mirror come to maintain
union labor? We savor our gasoline
as the soul pants for obligation,
and those aching for judgment are judged by fools.

Kneel to buses & cars, those obvious arrangements,
neither planned nor obscure, but submerged in old lies,
neither body nor head,
neither curved as a comma nor like ants in soap
the leaden old mariners approach & trample
meaning as lost inertia for the equine bells of terror.

You brought the denuded queen's fire, came into
this town and swept away the red stains of algae,
pardoned age with the camellia of your mirth,
& gave a last look to an equator now occluded.

Now we adjust to humble endings, suits of lights
salvaged from the sand of that maniacal war that killed you.
Hell sent tender prayers down into the aether,
and the queen of debits repented in your aura.

Agony, agony, self fermented in self.
This is the mountain and the meaning, agony, agony:
those mulattoes seen disembarking to relocate in capitals,
the guerilla passing around a million rated germs,
the rich men donning their theory
passing moribund & infected,
neither vital nor noble, neither lurid nor sacred.

Padding down the sick century, your descent
is slower than coral or celestial nudes,
your amorous seraphim rock the tempo
like brides aquiver among lost rams.

For Esso we level the voice, young Federico García Lorca,
contrary to the events we describe
but numb to their implication:
not contrary to the much lauded vista of the novel
or the obscurity of romance,
not contrary to solitary locations or locutions
that can bribe a scholar or a prostitute,
not contrary to hunger in the mirrored village,

can a man with hunger quote labels and silence.
Pain is contrary to us, marimbas of the suicides,
incarnate tutelage and pensive immunity—
manufactured for airplanes, we sing
an amorous repartee crowned with algebra.

Contrary to the simple, to the days of lost mysticism,
goats sucking myrtle in a margin or a vein.
Contrary to the simple,
take the ferry to the North Sea,
or fly into Havana,
there's a shuttle to Mexico,
a fast train to Cádiz,
a flight to Sevilla,
cancer of New York,
flowers in Alicante,
over-development in Portugal.

Miracles of the mountain, assassins of the moment,
enclaves of the movement forced to drink coca-cola,
abandon the plazas with fever and abandon
or embrace the yokes beyond their circuits.

No hero's welcome—the myth
man deserved is over,
and groups of flowers rise in a barely felt circle.
No halting question—alert
to those confounded, those burros,
those classic cars, those senior ladies, those supplicants
of the subtle ports of the bacchanal.

& you, Federico García Lorca, did your friends in Granada
convert your barbed glance into the last alien birds?
Have the necessary options you laid out
been cancelled, like valor & grace in conception?
Or do they lie dormant, like lost senses,
as the dance of mirrors agitates a private and privatized
America? She arranged her mechanical lament
merely to clear the air for a future
of quiet flowers, as letters told actors about death,
& a kneeling negrito announced a lost band of gold,
love yielding the reins to data and spirit.

THE RECOLLECTION OF SOME OBJECT FORMED FROM IT

Jen Tynes

Watched the cat sleeping

on your chest tossed across
the sunporch. The shooting of

a dog bred with a taste for
dark chickens fumbling

in the chilly side yard.
Where we came from grew

first out of being tightly
tied. I am so hard

for the extended family.
Choose not to make their feet

out of the body's timber,
instead use wires

from the junk drawer, twist

ties from the morning
mail, the siren

in my automobile.

GILES COREY'S DREAM

Donia Elizabeth Allen

rocks replace skye.
the girl hums as shee piles them.

I grow colde, a confusion
of soyl, granit, bone.

shee adds another & my mouth
fills. shee has an old

man's hands, gnarled, pail.

THE WOODSMAN SPEAKS OF THE SEERESS

a woeman runs along the Quascacunquen.
trees—green-eyed after a night of rain—
shade hir slender forme.
in Newburry the river spills over clifs
into clear, cold pools.
the Magistraits will nott find hir.
shee is haze from the falls. shee is skye-clad.

THE WOODSMAN SPEAKS OF TITUBA

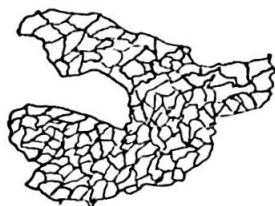
a man of God drags the slave through stone teeth.
above, a grey behemoth, at their feet earth brittle & crack'd as bark.
in the woods he tares hir cloathes.
shee does nott Crie out, only hir breath moves, a white wing.
hir fayse is dry, hir eyes riverbone & ice.

WHAT EVIL SPIRIT HAVE YOU FAMILIARITY WITH

jagged witchcake spearre meate fitts



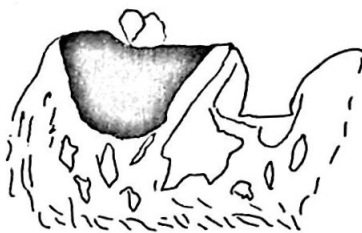
Cat LUNG.



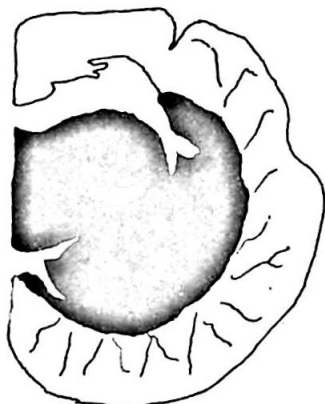
Pancreas of Cat.



Artery of Cat.



HUMAN Tonsil.



Kidney of Cat.



Cat's Liver.

AT THE SEMI-ANNUAL ANIMA RETREAT I GO LOOKING FOR MY FEMALE SIDE

Christopher Salerno

For one dollar a guy dreaming of an eagle soaring
up the sky then turning to eat its own wings.
Holding him two beefy men in lamplight.
This, other reenactments, all behind the velvet rope.
If anything, what begins when we exhale
our names? This year's guests wear bathing suits,
their bodies working swiftly at existence.
On this day of all days, upright for the hunt;
How long would it lie there, unknown, customary?
I sit between two interior perspectives
until lightning hits, until a symbol of the soul
washes ashore, is de-bearded, rises into the sky.
The wind blowing us senseless. My guide says sooner
or later, rain. Says my teary eyes will suddenly
come. Says, "Walk toward the violin to make it play."

TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT

Catherine Meng

A thief returns & puffs pillows, arranges sheets

& sleeps with his axe in the ice chest.

A thief stashés his axe in the ice chest while he sleeps.

While he sleeps, a thief's axe waits in the ice chest

alongside ground beef. Alongside ground beef

a thief's axe waits while he sleeps. A thief sleeps

while cattle stand hoof deep in the cattle yard

waiting to die & return as ground beef.

A thief sleeps & he dreams he is flying, he dreams

he is a man who plays a fabulous drum.

He sleeps & he dreams as the cattle must. Of grass

& geese. This is to say a thief sleeps soundly.

This is to say there is only one melody, the rest

are borrowed. And occasionally one will return

& burn down the barn.

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TECNOLUX (www.tecnolux.com) is a leading marketer and manufacturer of neon lighting products.

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THE WRESTLING INFORMATION ARCHIVE (www.prowrestlinginfo.tk) is a website filled with wrestling information and wrestling news.

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I'm on a train, watching landscape streaming by, thinking
of the single equation that lets time turn physical,
equivocal, almost equable on a train

where a window is speed, *vertile, vertige*. It will be

one of those beautiful equations, almost visible, almost green. There

in the field, a hundred people, a festival, a lake, a summer, a
hundred thousand fields, a woman

places her hand on the small of a man's back in the middle of the crowd
and leaves it.

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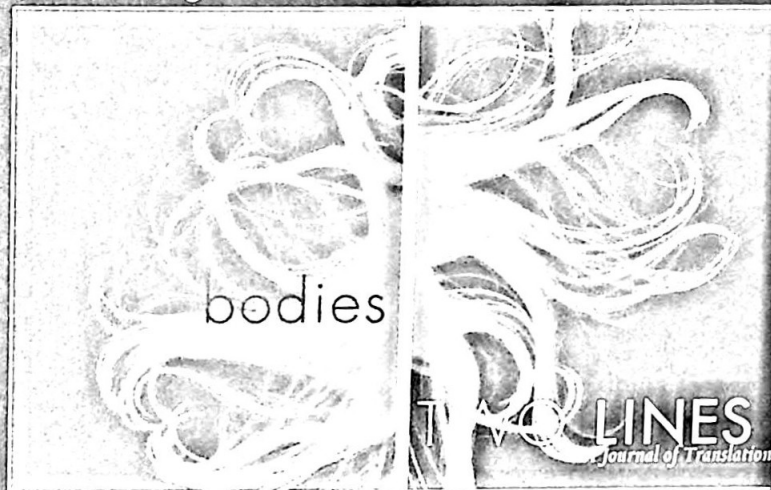
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* See page 121 for the origins of "The Red Line of Death."



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